DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 303 906 EA 020 735

AUTHOR Grimmett, Peter P.; Crehan, E. Patricia
TITLE A Comparison of Conferencing Strategies Used in Two Different Supervisory Dyads and the Effects on Teachers' Classroom Management Behaviour.
SPONS AGENCY Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).
PUB DATE Apr 88
GRANT 410-85-0339; 410-86-2014
NOTE 57p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrators; Case Studies; *Classroom Techniques; *Communication Skills; Comparative Analysis; Educational Diagnosis; Elementary Secondary Education; Principals; *Supervisory Methods; *Supervisory Training; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

This paper presents, in five sections, a comparison of conferencing strategies used in two different supervisory dyads and the effects of the strategies on teachers' classroom management behavior. The first section is an overview of a larger study that sought to determine if the improvement of management practices of supervisees is associated with conferencing (principal-led intervention) or with research-verified knowledge about classroom management taught by supervisors trained in conferencing techniques (a "common language" approach). The second and third sections present case studies of each dyad. The first dyad is composed of a high conceptual level (CL) principal interacting with a low CL teacher; the second, of a low CL principal interacting with a low CL teacher. The fourth section compares the two different dyads in terms of the conferencing strategies used by the high and low CL principals, and in terms of the associated effects that were evident in the teacher's classroom management practices. The final section offers some concluding observations about the nature of the dyadic interactions. Findings revealed that a teacher's conceptual level and the role that the teacher's responses play in the dynamic of conference interaction, the principal's knowledge of pertinent content (in the case of this study, classroom management), the principal's ability (or lack thereof) to observe classroom events accurately, the principal's ability to transform a facilitating approach into an enabling one, and certain aspects of organizational life that act as constraints on both principal and teacher enhance or inhibit the teacher's classroom management processes. (JAM)

A COMPARISON OF CONFERENCING STRATEGIES USED IN TWO DIFFERENT SUPERVISORY DYADS AND THE EFFECTS ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR

ED303906

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Peter P. Grimmett
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

by

Peter P. Grimmett
Director and Assistant Professor

and

E. Patricia Crehan
Assistant Professor

Centre for the Study of Teacher Education
University of British Columbia

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April, 1988.

The study reported in this paper was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (Grants #410-85-0339 & #410-86-2014). The authors gratefully acknowledge that this work could not have been carried out without this funding. The opinions expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the policy, position, or endorsement of SSHRCC. The authors also acknowledge the contributions of Maryl Stewart, Bruce McGillivray and Cindy Drossos to the data collection, data analysis and manuscript preparation aspects of the study respectively.

EA 020 735

A COMPARISON OF CONFERENCING STRATEGIES USED IN TWO DIFFERENT SUPERVISORY DYADS AND THE EFFECTS ON TEACHERS' CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOUR

This paper will report a specific analysis taken from a larger study which investigated the effects of supervisors' intervention on teachers' classroom management practices. The specific analysis focusses on two different supervisory dyads. The first dyad is composed of a high conceptual level (CL) principal interacting with a low CL teacher; the second, of a low CL principal interacting with a low CL teacher. The two dyads will be compared in terms of the conferencing strategies that were used by the high and low CL principals, and the associated effects that were evident in the teacher's classroom management practices.

The paper is divided into five main sections, the first of which is an overview of the larger study. The second and third sections present case studies of each dyad. The fourth section compares the two different dyads. The final section offers some concluding observations about the nature of the dyadic interactions.

OVERVIEW OF LARGER STUDY

The purpose of the larger study was two-fold. First, it sought to examine whether effective supervision requires supervisors who use certain strategies ("process") as they conference with supervisees, or whether the mere acquisition by supervisors and/or supervisees of research-verified knowledge about classroom management ("content") was, in and of itself, sufficient to bring about improvement in the management practices of supervisees. Second, the larger study attempted to test the results of an earlier investigation (Grimmett, 1984) which found that effective supervisors not only used specific process skills in their dyadic interactions, but also that they functioned at a high conceptual level. At the same time, the present study also extended the previous one by taking into account the role played by the "content" of conference discussions.

Accordingly, the larger study sought to find out whether positive changes in teachers' classroom management practices associated with:

(1) principal-led intervention in which only the supervisors were given access to relevant knowledge and conferencing skills designed to facilitate teachers' acquisition of such knowledge;
(2) a "common language" approach in which both principals and teachers were exposed to relevant knowledge about classroom management; or
(3) a staff development approach in which teachers were brought together in small groups to study the relevant classroom management materials.

The study also sought to ascertain the relationship between the effects of these different treatments and the conceptual level of the supervisors involved.

Theoretical Framework

Typically, instructional supervision is conducted by principals. However, research suggests considerable divergence in such activities. Where teachers relate experiencing high anxiety (McGee & Eaker, 1977; Withall & Wood, 1977) and at best tolerating administrator observations (Blumberg, 1980), supervisors themselves hold the constrasting view that their interventions effect improvement in classroom performance (Blumberg, 1980, Cawelti & Reavis, 1980). This finding is hardly surprising, given that the major texts (e.g., Alfonso *et al.*, 1975; Bellon *et al.*, 1976; Cogan, 1973; Glickman, 1985; Goldhammer *et al.*, 1980; Harris, 1985; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Lucio & McNeil, 1979; Mosher & Purpel, 1972; Reavis, 1978; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1983) are based on the premise that supervisors can make a difference. The limited research conducted on supervision (Boulet, 1981; Coffey, Reavis, 1978; Skrak, 1973; Zonca, 1972) confirms this premise. Also, the voluminous research on school effectiveness (Austin, 1979; Brookover *et al.*, 1979; Clark *et al.*, 1984; DeBevoise, 1984; Dwyer, 1984; Hall *et al.*, 1984; Irvine, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982, 1986; Levine *et al.*, 1984; McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Snyder, 1983; Squires *et al.*, 1981; Sweeney, 1982) suggests that principals use supervision as one way of executing the instructional leadership role found to have a strong impact on the program.

The research on staff development (Berman & McLaughlin 1978; Bussis *et al.*, 1976; Gersten *et al.*, 1982; Lieberman & Miller, 1979, 1981, 1984; Little, 1982; Nemser, 1983; Oja, 1980; Sparks, 1983; Zumwalt, 1986) suggests, however, that teachers develop more through collegial rather than hierarchical intervention. Two versions of collegial intervention appear to be extant. One involves principals with teachers; the other involves only teachers. Hunter (1984, 1985) has continually argued that principals and teachers need to be exposed together to elements of instruction so as to develop a common language/understanding. Showers' (1983) study confirms that principals acting as peer coaches are effective in helping teachers improve instruction. Yet Sparks (1983) reports that bringing teachers only together in small groups to study knowledge of teaching has an impact on instuctional performance. This was also found by Anderson *et al.* (1979), Crawford *et al.* (1978), Evertson *et al.* (1982), Good & Grouws (1979), Holly (1982), Leslie (1982), and Schiff (1982).

Method

The study was conducted in the naturalistic setting of elementary schools and classrooms in a large urban district. The volunteer sample of principals and teachers constituted 15 dyads which were divided into four groups for the study. The dyads were randomly assigned to three treatment groups and one control

group according to the conceptual level[1] of the supervising principal, i.e., high and low. This was done because Glickman (1985), Grimmett (1984), and Thies-Sprinthall (1980) had found high supervisor conceptual level to be associated with effective intervention and supervision participant satisfaction.

In treatment #1, the principals were taught those conferencing skills which Grimmett (1984) had found to have a positive effect on the supervision experience for teachers and the research findings on classroom management coming out of the Texas studies (Emmer *et al.*, 1984 and Evertson *et al.*, 1984). No treatment was offered to the teachers in this group. Treatment #2 brought both teachers and principals together for the workshops on classroom management but no exposure to conferencing skills was given to the principals. Treatment #3 gave the classroom management workshops only to the teachers and not to the principals. Nor did these principals receive any exposure to workshops on conferencing skills. The control group received neither the supervision conferencing skills nor the classroom management workshops.

Data Collection

Two sets of data were collected, one set before the workshop interventions and one set following the workshop interventions. Each of the two data sets contained two subsets, namely classroom observation data and supervisory conference data.

Classroom Observation Data

Two instruments were used to collect the classroom observation data subset. The "Classroom Observation Record",[2] based on instruments developed by Good and Brophy (1984), looked at the teachers' classroom management behaviour. These data, which constituted "thick, focussed description", enabled a qualitative picture of

---

[1] The conceptual levels of all principals and teachers were determined by administering the Schroder et al., (1967) version of the Paragraph Completion Test (scored by Suedfeld and Associates) and confirmed through interactive analysis of the videotaped post-observation conferences using Grimmett's (1982) Clinical Supervision Participants' Interactive Conceptual Level Analysis System (ClinSuPICLAS).

[2] The Classroom Observation Record, completed by two independent observers from extensive field notes, recorded information about the teacher's management of transitions, groups, and pupil attentiveness. The Observation Record also required a narrative account for each of the nine management dimensions identified by the "Texas studies", namely: (1) instructional management, (2) room arrangement, (3) rules and procedures, (4) meeting pupil concerns, (5) managing pupil behaviour, (6) disruptive behaviour, (7) inappropriate pupil behaviour, (8) classroom climate, and (9) miscellaneous. Despite the fact that the pre-existing categories were the same for all teachers, several different themes emerged for each individual teacher.

the teacher's classroom management practices to be drawn. The "Component Rating Scale" (Evertson and Emmer, 1981; 1982) contained 49 items on a five point scale (1-5) in the same nine categories listed on the Observation Record. The rating scales for each teacher were based on the qualitative data collected on the first instrument and were completed immediately following the classroom observation by each of the coders working independently. These data produced a quantitative "profile" of each teacher's classroom management behaviour. In addition to these data, the principals and teachers completed demographic questionnaires concerning factors such as years of experience, length of time in present school, and numbers of years with present principal.

Supervisory Conference Data

The second subset of data were gathered on the principal-teacher supervisory conference by videotaping the conference (the camera was set up on a tripod, turned on, and the researcher then left the room to eradicate the attenuating effects of a non-participating person) and by playing back the conferences to each participant separately as immediately following the recorded conference as possible for purposes of stimulated recall and structured interview. The post-conference stimulated recall and interview sessions were recorded on audio-tape and, together with the videotaped conferences, subsequently transcribed. The questions posed by the researcher (about the purpose and focus of the conference and how both principal and teacher went about pursuing the purpose and focus) always came at the end of the stimulated recall session. This was done to safeguard the validity of the self-report data gathered. The videotaped playback was only stopped when subjects recalled processing a thought during the conference or when they had comments or reactions to what they saw happening. Any questions that came to the researcher during the conference playback were noted and held in abeyance until the post interview session.

Data Analysis

The analysis of both data sets in the larger study was conducted ascertain what had happened in the supervision conferences and in the teachers' classroom management practices. The dialogue of each conference was analysed for the particular focii which emerged in the principal-teacher discussion of the latter's classroom management practices. The stimulated recall and interview transcripts were analysed for the substantive content that emerged in the recalled thoughts, comments and reactions of each participant to the supervision experience as a means of confirming the conference focii. Both sets of transcripts were also analysed for the particular ways in which principals conducted themselves during conference discussion with teachers.

Separate from the conference data analysis, the classroom observational data were classified and used to induce categories of classroom management behaviours. These categories of behaviour formed the basis of a classroom management profile which was developed for each teacher's observed performance. These profiles were than compared with the management focii established by the supervisor and teacher in the post-observation conference to see what relationship (if any) existed between what transpired in the supervision conference and what happened in the teachers' classroom management performance. Each of the fifteen dyads studied was written up as a case study. Once completed, these case studies were further examined according to (a) study grouping, (b) principal and teacher conceptual level, and (c) the *modus operandi* of principals in supervision conferences in light of the treatment given and conceptual level variable operative in both conference participants.

Findings

This preliminary study found that teacher involvement with relevant knowledge (treatments #2 and #3) was associated with positive effects in teachers' classroom management practices. It also found that principal-led intervention was associated with positive effects only when the supervisor was capable of functioning conceptually at a high, complex level. Moreover, the conceptual level of teachers emerged as an important factor because positive effects in classroom performance were associated more so with high teacher conceptual level than with any one of the treatments given. Teachers appear then to play an important role in determining the extent to which supervisory intervention is successful, both in terms of impact on classroom performance and participants' degree of satisfaction with the process. At the same time, the conceptual level (CL) of both teachers and supervisors was found to play an important role. High and/or moderate CL supervisors and high and/or moderate CL teachers were associated with positive change in observed classroom management performance. By contrast, low CL supervisors and low CL teachers were associated with negative effects on classroom management practice. These qualitative findings suggest not only that the teacher's CL is an important factor in the process but also, and more importantly, that the *supervisor-teacher conceptual level pairing* is likely a critical determinant of whether or not classroom improvement takes place. (See Grimmett & Crehan, 1987, for detailed exposition of these findings).

The Focus of this Paper

These findings from the larger study are somewhat disquieting, given that much of the research on conceptual level suggests that the majority of teachers (Bernier, 1976; Oja, 1977; Bents, 1978) and administrators (Silver, 1975) function at the lower levels. The reality of practice is such that we do not find many

supervision dyads consisting of supervisors and teachers both having high and/or moderate CL. Yet research on supervisory impact (Thies-Sprinthall, 1980; Grimmett, 1984) has found positive change in teachers' classroom practice to be associated only with supervisors of high CL. How, then, do high CL supervisors interact with teachers of low CL? How does the nature of their interaction differ from that of low CL supervisors with low CL teachers? The larger study, as noted above, suggests that there may be different outcomes arising from the conceptual level pairing of the supervisor and the teacher. What is it about the interactions in two different dyads which tend to create a greater or lesser impact on classroom management practice? The larger study suggests that positive change in classroom practice does occur in dyads in which high CL supervisors interact with low CL teachers although the magnitude and quality of such improvement is less than in dyads in which the teacher's CL is high and/or moderate.

Given the above questions, the overall purpose of this paper is to develop some understanding of the operative factors in supervisory dyads in which the conceptual levels of the principal and the teacher are the same or different. In an attempt to achieve this purpose, two comparative analyses were undertaken. The first comparison examined how a high CL principal conferences with a low CL teacher and how a low CL principal conferences with a low CL teacher by unpacking the content focii and process strategies used by the principal *within* each dyad. The second analysis compared the interactions *between* the two different dyads in terms of both substantive content and supervisory strategies. In order to provide not only the background for these comparisons, but also the basis for results of the analyses, each dyad is presented as a case study.

CASE STUDIES

Each dyadic case study consists of three main sections. The first section contains a qualitative description of both classroom observations.[3] The second and third sections contain qualitative descriptions of the two supervisory conferences and accompanying recall interviews[4] which followed each of the classroom observations. In order to provide a contextual framework, each case study is introduced by a

---

[3] The first section describing each teacher's classroom management behaviour was based on the qualitative data reported in the Classroom Observation Records. The same two lessons were observed simultaneously by the school principal. The qualitative and the quantitative data collected by the project observers formed the basis for assessing change in the teachers' classroom management behaviours. The data collected by the principals were used as the basis for the post-observation conferences with the teachers.

[4] To distinguish between the proceedings of the supervisory conference and those of the subsequent recall interview, a conscious decision was taken to describe the conference proceedings in the present tense and the recall interview proceedings in the past tense.

brief demographic description of the principal and the teacher.

HIGH PCL-LOW TCL DYAD:[5] PRINCIPAL BRIAN AND TEACHER AUDREY[6]

Within the larger study, there were four dyads in the high PCL-low TCL set. The within and between comparative analyses of these dyads revealed not only that high CL principals focussed on similar content and used similar supervisory strategies in their efforts to facilitate improvement in the teachers' classroom management performance, but also that there were commonalities among the low CL teachers in their responses to the strategies employed by the principals. The particular dyad selected for inclusion in this paper was chosen because it provides the most clear cut evidence of the factors which are operative when there is a difference in conceptual levels.

Brian has a total of eleven years of experience as an administrator, one of which was as an elementary school vice-principal and ten as an elementary school principal, all within his present district. He has been principal of his present school for four years.

Audrey has a total of 15 years of teaching experience, ten at the intermediate level (grades 4-7) and five at the primary level (grades 1-3). Relative to the whole sample of 15 teachers, she was classified as "moderately experienced". She has taught in her present school, with her present principal, for four years. During all of these four years the principal has worked with this participating teacher.

Teacher 13: "Audrey"

At the time of the observations, Audrey was teaching a grade three class, whose enrolment increased from 25 to 30 pupils from the first to the second classroom visit. The pupils were seated in a traditional rows configuration for both lessons. The first observed lesson was Language Arts (seatwork and reading groups); the second, Arithmetic (a review of the six times multiplication table). Prior to this intervention Audrey had also received two evaluation reports both of which had called into question her competency as a teacher. The project observers were not privy to this information at the time of either classroom visit.

The qualitative data collected by the two project observers revealed problems in four dimensions of Audrey's classroom management. These problematic aspects

---

[5] PCL refers to principal conceptual level; TCL, to teacher conceptual level.
[6] Fictitious names have been used for both principals and teachers.

concerned deficiencies in group management, monitoring, pacing and sequencing, and transitions.

Group Management.

Audrey's classroom management problems arise, at least in part, from the way in which she handles the class when she herself is engaged with a small reading group. For example, on one occasion she left her reading group to find a ruler for one of the pupils (they were required to use a ruler as a "line guide" when reading aloud or following the text when another pupil was reciting). No pre-transition reminder about the rulers was given to the pupils prior to the beginning of the small group activity. On another occasion, a pupil interrupted the reading group to request permission to leave the room. Both these management problems could have been dealt with by having routine procedures in place.

In addition to these procedure-based difficulties, Audrey also had problems in handling, or, more accurately not handling, the non-reading group pupils who were engaged in seatwork activity. She simply did not interact with those pupils at all; she seemed oblivious to their presence in the room. Her involvement with each reading group was total. If Audrey was aware of the off-task behaviour and raised hands among the 17 or 18 seatworkers, she took no action of any kind either to correct the inappropriate pupil behaviour or to provide assistance to those requesting help. This non-involvement was also observed by the principal who, after watching the situation deteriorate for some 20 minutes, eventually moved quietly to return pupils to their tasks and to answer the questions of those whose hands were up (some of them had been raised for close to 15 minutes without acknowledgement). The independent observers concluded that non-management of the seatworkers was the result of a decided lack of monitoring.

Monitoring: First Observation

Audrey was seated in the reading group circle on one of the small, primary-size chairs with her side to the rest of the class. Because she is short in stature, and used a pupil chair, Audrey did not have a clear line of visibility to the seatwork group. In addition to a complete lack of scanning, Audrey did not circulate among the seatworkers between each reading group session. She simply remained seated and awaited the arrival of the next group who were summoned verbally to come to the carpet at the back of the room. The group returning to their desks were given directions for doing the reading comprehension worksheets.

Within the reading group itself, Audrey made some attempt to ensure pupil engagement. On three occasions, she rose from her chair to move a pupil's ruler ("line guide") to the line of text being read by the pupil. Whether or not this was really an act to correct non-attending behaviour or just to assist English as a Second Language (ESL) pupils cannot be determined. However, regardless of the reason for the action, it did decrease the amount of off-task behaviour.

Monitoring: Second Observation

Relative to the first observation, Audrey showed some improvement in this management dimension. During the 13 minutes of slate work, she actively and purposefully circulated to monitor pupil progress. However, she also stopped monitoring in order to find a key and go to a locked storage cupboard, there to locate some needed materials for the feltboard. From then until the end of the lesson, Audrey tended to focus on individual pupils often with her back to the rest of the class. Rarely did she visually scan to ensure that all pupils were on-task. If Audrey did notice the extensive off-task behaviour (e.g., whispering, watching others, turning around, doing nothing), she took no corrective action despite the existence of auditory cues to do so. To some extent, the amount of off-task behaviour was attributable to the pacing and sequencing of the lesson.

Pacing and Sequencing: First Observation

Both project observers commented that the reading activity had gone on far too long; indeed, one of them wrote "the recitation seemed endless". Each reading group began with Audrey using flashcards on which were printed short phrases presumably from the book being read. The pupils were asked to recite together the phrases on each card. Non-reciting pupils were asked individually to repeat the flashcard phrases. The purpose of this exercise was unclear. Audrey was not drilling the words or the phrases, nor was she checking for comprehension by asking questions. On two occasions, the pupils read what was on the flashcard, yet Audrey asked them to repeat something not printed on the card (e.g., "*cf* the royal tailor" and "*for* the royal tailor", respectively). Audrey seemed determined to go through the whole set of about 13 or 14 cards, regardless of the level of pupil knowledge or interest. Following some seven minutes of reciting from the flashcards, the teacher herself began to read the story, with little expression and low volume, to the pupils who follow along using their rulers as line guides. There was no interaction, verbal or nonverbal, with the group. About six minutes later, each pupil in turn around the circle, was called upon to read aloud. The only variation in the pattern occurred when, about half way through this 15 minute segment, Audrey had the group read a few lines in unison. There was virtually nothing in the reading group sessions which provided variety or challenge to the pupils. The same observation applies to the seatwork group who, without

any help from the teacher, were expected to persevere for nearly 30 minutes with their reading comprehension worksheets. In the words of one observer, "the pacing was slow and dull with no observable evidence of variety or challenge".

Pacing and Sequencing: Second Observation

In this lesson, there were five segments all of which focussed on the six times table. Although different props were used, the content and method of each segment were virtually identical. Building on her oral introductory activity, Audrey asked the pupils "What is 2x6, 3x6...12x6?" As she wrote each equation on the chalkboard, the pupils copied it onto their slates. Her directions did not make clear initially that the class was to copy the numbers and not the pictures. During the third segment, Audrey asked different pupils, one by one, to fill in the answers to each equation on the board; the class watched as this activity was carried out. The last two segments required that the class again copy the six times table, which Audrey had pre-prepared on a sliding panel of the chalkboard, first into their math notebooks and then onto separate flashcards. She also told them to make two flashcards for 6x5 and 5x6 because they both had the same answer. At this point, one pupil called out "you told us that before". The entire lesson was rote and repetition. As evidenced by the escalating off-task behaviour, the pupils appeared to be bored and disinterested by the lack of variety in a lesson whose purpose was not to teach the six times table for the first time but to review it.

Transitions: First Observation

Although the sequencing of this lesson contained very few transitions, there was evidence of inadequate planning which resulted in some disruption and loss of instructional time. For example, at the transition point between the first and second reading groups, Audrey did not circulate to ensure a prompt start by the first group on their assigned seatwork. Nor did she attend to the raised hands of those pupils who were already engaged in the seatwork activity. Both of these behaviours eroded instructional time. Moreover, Audrey did not remind the second reading group that rulers were required. It became apparent after completion of the flashcard segment that four of the eight pupils were without rulers. As these pupils went to their desks to get their rulers, the seatwork pupils were disrupted. To exacerbate the situation even further, one pupil just didn't have a ruler at all. In response, Audrey left the group, went to her own desk, located a ruler, and returned to continue with the reading group. It is noteworthy that Audrey seemed so intent on her mission that, despite the opportunity to do so, she did not scan the class even though she had walked between two rows of seated pupils and had made a return trip from the back to the front of the classroom.

Transitions: Second Observation

The first transition point followed an animated and enthusiastic whole class activity focussed on multiplying by sixes. Without any closure to that lively discussion, Audrey suddenly told the pupils to return to their desks and, row-by-row, get their slates which were stored in two adjacent compartments on the bottom row of some open shelves. Two pupil monitors were assigned to hand a slate to each pupil individually; two others were asked to distribute the chalk. Because this transition lasted for about five minutes, the distribution of props became an activity in and of itself. About the same length of time was consumed by the return of the slates to the storage compartments. In point of fact, however, this second transition took nearly ten minutes because of the pupil-initiated washing of hands and desks. It was during this transition, rather than prior to it, that Audrey instructed the pupils to get out their math notebooks. Some five minutes passed before the entire class was ready to begin work. For the most part, transitions were concluded when the pupils concluded them. Audrey herself assumed the role of an uninvolved spectator passively watching the events in her classroom arena. Altogether, the transitions consumed about one third of the 45 minute observation.

Brian-Audrey (113-13) Conference Case Study #1

The Brian-Audrey conference[7] is conducted in a low-key fashion. The tone is one of politeness rather than friendliness. The first conference begins with Brian getting straight into the lesson analysis without any time taken to establish rapport or set the scene. The initial focus is on the three reading groups and the stories they were addressing. Audrey volunteers that she, as teacher, does not always have the time to read the story in full with any one group, so she usually assigns the completion of reading the story as homework. In this way, she feels she is providing the pupils with extra practice as they read to their parents at home. Brian questions whether the stories used in the lesson observed were done for the first time or whether they were being reviewed. Audrey confirms that the stories were used for the first time.

Brian now sharpens the focus to the group on the floor with Audrey for most of the lesson and begins to question the time spent by the teacher with this group. In the recall interview, the teacher stopped the tape at this point to acknowledge that the principal's big concern about the disproportionate amount of time she spent with the group on the floor was valid but added that she felt that the pupils in the other two groups doing seatwork had enough varied activities to keep them going. In the conference, however, Audrey is not so definite. She

---

[7] Recall that the present tense is used to describe conference proceedings and the past tense is used to represent reported thoughts and comments coming from the stimulated recall session

states that she would consider changing her tactics if the pupils in the seatwork groups were to become "hyper". Brian, in turn, suggests that some of the pupils in the other groups were becoming quite restless and Audrey acknowledges that she was aware of that. But when Brian decides to pursue whether she really needed to cover the large number of phrases that she did with the one group, Audrey maintains that the entire process was appropriate. In the recall interview, Brian confirmed that he felt strongly that this introductory episode was too long and that he is unused to phrases being used instead of words. In the conference, however, this point is lost. Despite acknowledging that some pupils in the seatwork groups were becoming restless, the teacher steadfastly maintains that nothing was inappropriate in what she was doing. It appears, then, that Audrey cannot make the connection between her teaching of numerous phrases to one group over a time period fifteen to twenty minutes and the acknowledged inattentiveness of pupils in the seatwork groups.

Brian now turns to eliciting the purpose to which the teacher used the flash cards in dealing with the reading group on the floor. Audrey responds that her purpose was to get the pupils to read more fluently in phrases rather than in words. Brian asks for clarification on whether she is concerned about the meaning of the words and phrases. Audrey responds that her focus at this point was not on meaning but would cover that in lessons on comprehension. In the recall interview, the principal reported wanting to pursue the question of meaning versus decoding with the teacher. He interprets Audrey here as saying that she'll concern herself with meaning later, that she's only concerned with decoding at this point. Consequently, he begins to use his questioning deliberately to measure whether he should pursue this issue now or later. He eventually decides to pursue the issue later. The teacher's recall at this very same point takes a different tack. She saw the need for pupils to talk to develop their oral language and the focus of her teaching of reading is on creative expression. Indeed, in the conference she alludes to the fact that the principal might just have seen some pupil creativity which was not part of the lesson intent. The principal offers no comment. In the recall interview, however, he conceded that he was aware of what he considers to be the teacher's naivety about creativity and deliberately chose not to comment.

Instead, Brian switches the focus from seatwork groups to the issue of cursive writing and the extent to which pupils in Audrey's class are practising these skills. In the recall interview, the principal explained why he had done this. He was aware that this teacher is reluctant to allow her pupils to use their cursive writing skills and he wanted to see if she is still maintaining that stand. In the conference, Audrey explains that she has taught cursive writing since September but finds that some pupils cannot combine seatwork and cursive writing. Brian attempts to pursue this point to establish why pupils are having this difficulty but Audrey talks about the different book she uses for cursive writing which the principal could not have seen in the lesson observed. Clearly, the teacher sees cursive writing as a set of separate skills which she teaches in its own right whereas the principal is looking for the integration of cursive writing

with all forms of written work. This misunderstanding is never explicated in the conference; the principal merely drops the point to pursue it at a later date.

Brian returns the focus to the group on the floor. He questions how Audrey deals with pupils in the other two groups doing seatwork who shoot up their hands while she is "locked into" (supervisor's actual words) the group on the floor. Audrey responds that she generally leaves the group to deal with such incidents but in the recall interview she stated that her established procedure was for pupils to come to her if they are experiencing difficulties. The principal's recall at this point was to clarify that his use of the words "locked in" to depict the teacher's stimulus boundedness with the one group just came out that way -- it was not a deliberate choice on his part. In the conference, Audrey states that she did not go over to the specific children who had their hands up because there was only two minutes left in the lesson when she first noticed their hands up. Brian then relates how he went over to a pupil whose hand had been up for some time and who was having difficulty with the seatwork assigned. The pupil had not progressed past the first question because she thought it was make-believe and wanted to know if she really had to do that one. The principal relates how he told her to answer the question as best she could and she got down to work. Audrey's response to this information is that the pupil in question falls apart very easily and that is why she sits in a position where the teacher can keep an eye on her. It seems ironic that a girl suitably placed for the teacher to keep an eye on would not be seen by Audrey until two minutes before the end of the lesson. This discrepancy, however, never became explicit either during the conference or in the subsequent recall interviews of both participants.

At this point in the conference, principal Brian switches to explore Audrey's planning and preparation, framing it around the focus of her day-book. He introduces the topic with the disclaimer that he has not looked through her day-book but has merely glanced at the page for the day of the lesson as he happened to walk by her desk. In the recall interview, Brian explained that he had a concern about Audrey's planning for there was only one brief entry -- 2:30 p.m. gym -- in the whole of her day-book for that day. Brian pursues the lack of specificity in Audrey's planning as if he is concerned about what a substitute teacher would have to do under such circumstances. "I've no doubt you know what you're going to do with the day, I'm just thinking for the sake of someone coming in and not knowing what the day looks like" (lines 270-272, Conference transcript). But the first part of this statement essentially dilutes his reported concern about the teacher's lack of planning and its consequential effects on the execution of the lesson. As a result, the teacher wittingly or unwittingly disregards the cue about planning and picks up the substitute teacher perspective and she suggests that she would phone the school to inform a substitute fully if she were ever to get sick. In the recall interview, Brian reported noting this in the conference as a point he must pursue with Audrey because she does not, as a rule, phone the school when she is off sick. He decided to pursue it at a later date, along with other general points, e.g., cursive writing, and chose to deal only with those points, e.g., flashcards, which he deemed specific to the lesson

under observation.

Principal Brian therefore returns the conference focus to the concern about Audrey's stimulus boundedness vis-à-vis the two groups engaged in seatwork. To do so, he illustrates how another pupil appeared to be out of touch with the lesson for the last twenty minutes or so. Brian describes the concern in a low-key fashion:

> It was my impression that you weren't always aware of the pupils in the seats during the group, because you were caught up so much in what you were doing... [one pupil] for the last twenty minutes or so was totally out of it... to the point where I thought, I couldn't, I wished she'd, did she not know what to do? (lines 280-282, 288-289, 292-293, Conference transcript)

In the middle of this description, Brian stands up and demonstrates how the pupil in question was acting. Because he wondered whether the pupil knew what she had to do, Brian went over to her to find out. Upon checking with her, he found that she did and suggested to her that she get to work answering the assigned questions. Audrey's response to this is revealing. She rejoins: "that is the story of her life, she would do that if I was sitting at my desk" (lines 299-300, Conference transcript). In the recall interview, Brian interpreted this comment about the pupil as Audrey knowing what the pupil is like but that it is not her responsibility as teacher to monitor the pupils when they are working. He found this to be ironic since the very point he was trying to make is for the teacher to monitor the rest of the class whenever she is working with one group.

For whatever reason, Brian leaves the issue about group work and teacher monitoring unresolved to make some positive comments about the good tone in the class and the teacher's board work which included questions on the story for the group on the floor. In the recall interview, Brian suddenly realized that the questions for the story, which Audrey had so neatly put on the board (the board work for which he had complimented her) were never addressed in the lesson. This brought with it the stunning recognition that he had missed a vital opportunity to probe Audrey's timing of the entire lesson. In the conference, Brian turns yet again to the concern about time allocation but this time he states that pupils should not be sitting for such a long period of time on the same activity:

> I guess in the end I would want to just do more over a period of time, but just from what I saw this morning, knowing the age of those kids and how long they can sit in one place, I, it's just my first reaction that I don't think I would want to have one group sitting there for more than twenty minutes. (lines 315-320, Conference transcript)

Although this marks a change in Brian's approach from eliciting information and

emitting cues to stating his actual concern, he nevertheless expresses himself tentatively with the disclaimer that this is just his first reaction. Brian reported in the recall interview that he was tentative in expression because he wanted the teacher to have the opportunity to tell him that the limit should be shorter. He also reported being tentative because he was unsure of his ground and felt that the teacher knew the pupils much better than he did. This professional respect for the teacher and her autonomy notwithstanding, Brian reported that, in his own judgment, he was very sure that twenty minutes was too long for what the teacher was attempting to achieve. In the conference, Audrey responds to Brian's statement of concern about the length of time involved in the story episode by noting that the pupils do not usually sit for twenty minutes. They had done so in the lesson observed because the story they were reading happened to be the longest one in the book. Moreover, she adds, she never gets to hear the story in its entirety in any one group. At this point Brian begins to posit alternative explanations, e.g., recess was coming, as to why the pupils behaved the way they did during the last few minutes. It is not clear from the recall data whether this represented a genuine attempt on the part of the supervisor to be understanding and identify with the teacher or whether it was really a case of the principal backing away from a point he had had little success in making. What is clear is that the point about time allocation had not made an impact on the teacher. She reported that, given that the lesson was conducted on a Monday with pupils who watch videos all week-end, get little sleep, and come to school dog-tired, the lesson went well and that the pupils had had lots of work to do. Audrey even makes this point in the conference. She suggests that the lesson had gone as planned but that, if anything, she overplanned with the consequence that there was no room for holes in which she could have stopped and done something different with the class.

The conference ends with Audrey saying that she would welcome discussion about the reading ability range (K-8) present in her class. Brian passes no comment in the conference but during the recall interview disputed that the range was as wide as the teacher had suggested.

Post-Interview: Audrey

This interview always began with the question: "Are there any final comments you would like to make about the conference?" Probing was only undertaken by the interviewer if the participant chose to elaborate on the conference and made comments which needed clarification. In Audrey's case, the only comment she wished to make was that she felt comfortable in supervision. When asked to expand, she suggested that it was not because of any relationship with the principal but because she is so used to having people observe her.

Post-Interview: Brian

Brian began his responses by referring to his body language and lack of preparation. Not only was he aware of his body language during the conference but he also went to great lengths to ensure that he not communicate "blocks" non-verbally. At the same time, he admitted that he had not prepared much for the conference because his preference was to conduct it as immediately after the lesson observation as possible.

Brian then went on to share some background details pertinent to his supervision of Audrey. Because she had recently switched Grade levels, he wanted to be generally supportive of her so that they could together look closely at certain issues, e.g., how long groups can work with her or independently without her at this level. Brian saw Audrey as a very professional teacher with ready-made answers to any concerns raised by him or others but with a gap between her capabilities and performance that he was trying to address. He also knew that this teacher had interpersonal difficulties with other colleagues and pupils which had not surfaced in the lesson observation or the conference. She was known to shout a good deal in her class but she had not done that at all in the lesson observed. Further, Brian had taken over two weeks to arrange this first observation. The teacher had expressed apprehension and he had allowed her the time she needed to work out her feelings about whether she was ready to be supervised or not.

The principal's final comments had to do with his supervisory style and whether the teacher grasped some of the concerns he was attempting to raise. Brian was not sure that he had got through to Audrey or not but he had established a reference point for future discussions.

> I must admit it was, the reference was obtuse to her and I kind of glossed over them as though, well in passing let me mention... I don't consider anyone of these items closed and I've established a reference point. I say when I, you know, so if she didn't catch it, I'm going to be able to say "well, you know, I raised this when we spoke before." But no, I know Audrey well enough, she is no dollard, she's very clever, she's very particular herself and doesn't miss anything. So I'd be surprised if she missed anything and I don't think I was so subtle that something was completely buried. But I think there were a couple of things I think I could have been far more specific on, but I don't know, it's part of my style. (lines 1143-1157, Conference transcript)

Having said this, Brian also realized that Audrey is flappable under stress and he did not know how much she can take in under the pressure of a supervision conference. Brian's comments about his style were also revealing. His cueing of certain points for the teacher to consider is not a deliberate strategy but just the way he operates. His style is to create space for teachers to move into. As

such, he is very tolerant of conflict and diversity. He "pulls" people in appropriate directions rather than "pushing" them where they do not wish to go. He attempts to create a setting in which teachers feel they are doing something of their own volition. For Brian, teachers are professionals who themselves have to discover where to make changes in their classroom practices.

Brian-Audrey (113-13) Conference Case Study #2

The second Brian-Audrey conference begins with the principal asking the teacher how she felt about the lesson. Audrey responds that she felt a certain lack of spontaneity in her teaching because she was being observed. In the recall interview, she gave examples of the kind of stories she would make up spontaneously while teaching the lesson content, in this case, the six times table. Although not outwardly stressed, Audrey reported nevertheless being unable to transcend the inner anxiety that frequently accompanies observation. In the conference, Brian continues by asking Audrey to relate what happened after he had to leave the class. She reports that she was going to change activities but that the pupils asked to make and use math flashcards and she could not let such an opportunity pass. This point notwithstanding, Audrey admits that she spent far more time than was warranted on the arithmetic episode. In the recall interview, Brian regretted that he forfeited here the opportunity to pursue the question of who is in charge of the class, the teacher or the pupils. He dismissed Audrey's suggestion that this was a teachable moment upon which she was capitalizing.

Brian turns in the conference to focussing on Audrey's use of time and the role of flashcards in her teaching of pupils at this level. First, he establishes that Audrey has the pupils make up flashcards for each of the times tables covered. Then he asks her whether, in light of her comment (issued prior to the conference beginning) that she normally would not teach a lesson like the one on the six times table to a total group, she felt all the pupils needed what she had done in the lesson. Audrey maintains that most pupils did indeed need what she had done. Brian utters his surprise at the fact that the pupils are coming at the six times table for the first time. This brief exchange prompts comments from both principal and teacher in the recall interview. Audrey suggested that there is so much that principals do not know, particularly relating to the difference between the espoused curriculum and actual curriculum as teachers attempt to meet the learning needs of their pupils. She maintained that the pupils in her current class are not capable of handling the content of the espoused curriculum. Brian, in turn, recalled that he thought the pupils should be well beyond the six times table (which the teacher had said was new material) but that he was uncertain of his facts and therefore did not challenge on this point. He suspected that the teacher used the argument about lack of ability on the part of the pupils as a rationalization for not increasing the pace of learning. He added, however, that if the teacher is correct on this point, then the school has a serious problem. In

the conference itself Audrey claims that this could be the case:

> In fact, the grade three teachers at this school will tell you and grade four teachers, I think, I'm not sure about them, they hope to get up to the end of the five times table by the end of grade three. I want them to go further. (lines 164-167, Conference transcript)

Brian counters that finding out that the lesson revolved around the six times table "was a bit of an eye opener" (line 169, Conference transcript). In the recall interview, Brian took the view that this statement was far too subtle and unspecific. He felt that he should have been much more direct at this point but was unsure of himself and trying not to offend. These insights came with hindsight, however, not during the conference interaction: "I can see it better now than I could sense it when I was in it" (lines 1004-1005, Conference transcript). In addition, Brian noted that his habit of nodding to acknowledge the teacher's statements (his body language for being supportive rather than agreeing with everything said) was coming across as if he did indeed agree with the teacher's comments about the grade three pupils. He saw this as a further indication of his unwillingness to confront the teacher on the issue of instructional content and use of allocated time.

This reticence on the part of the principal may explain why, in the conference, he switches the focus temporarily away from use of time to some of the teacher's terminology used in the teaching of the six times table. Brian suggests to Audrey that, instead of saying six times nine is the equivalent of six times five plus six times four, it might be clearer for most pupils if she were to say nine sixes are equal to five sixes plus four sixes. He likens it to saying five bottlecaps plus four bottlecaps equals nine bottlecaps. Audrey asserts that the pupils will get that (presumably, more exact terminology) next time but according to her judgment about which ones need it.

> They'll get that next time we have a lesson on the six times table. The ones that already know it won't have any part of that lesson. The ones who can do it will get some work in the textbook and then these ones that need that breakdown will get some things from, well, the textbook doesn't really have exercises like that. I have to do my own. (lines 192-197, Conference transcript)

In one sense, it is difficult to see how this proposed action for the next lesson follows from the point the principal has made. In another sense, it appears that the teacher is asserting her professional autonomy and the principal seems to back off. The recall interview confirmed that Brian backed off but provided a different explanation. Brian believed that Audrey had understood his comment about terminology (even though he regarded her retort as irrelevant) and he made a conscious decision not to belabour the point.

Consequently, the conference focus returns to the use of time issue, with particular reference to the transitions that took place in the lesson before and after the activity in which the pupils used chalk slate-boards. Brian praises Audrey for using a felt board (on which concrete objects in rows of six were placed) and the slates to make abstract entities concrete for the pupils. He also suggests that the transitions before and after the slate activity were long and asks Audrey if she can think of a better way to organize the distribution and collection of the props. Because the teacher does not immediately appear to be clear on the point, the principal continues by describing a scene which unmistakeably applied to the collection of the slates:

> It just seemed to be dragged out, for quite a period of time. There was a lot of time involved with one row and then another row, and then some really pushed it because then they decided their desks needed to be washed. (lines 243-246, Conference transcript)

Audrey responds by saying that she is bothered by the time loss but thinks that having thirty pupils inevitably elongates any distribution process. She feels she should have had the slates out ready before the lesson started and Brian suggests that the lengthy collection process could be curtailed by astute use of pupil monitors. To reinforce this point, Brian gives Audrey positive feedback about her pedagogical decision to use the slates but underscores the organizational aspect which can waste valuable instructional time:

> if it is something you use quickly and if it takes that amount of time to make the switch, then something should be done and I don't know whether it's to have one person collect them all that quickly. ... I think it took between four and five minutes total just to get the slates back before they could move on. (lines 267-270, 274-276, Conference transcript)

Audrey's response here is noteworthy. She begins to talk about the different approaches she has used for collecting the slates, such as having the pupil at the front of each row collect for that row. Brian interrupts to ask if this particular approach worked and Audrey confirms that it did. Brian suggests that it works because only five or six pupils are out of their desks at a time instead of all thirty. The teacher notes this point but adds that the pupils "like to return their own" (lines 278-288, Conference transcript). Brian's exasperation comes out in the recall interview at this juncture. He had wanted to make what he considered to be a straightforward point about the distribution and collection of slates.

> I wanted to make this point, make it emphatically and get over with it but it dragged on and on and, ah, I don't know ... that had to be one of the most serious parts of that whole lesson, was getting it back, was the amount of time, and no apparent control on her part to change it. ... I would have thought she would have been quick to acknowledge the seriousness of that particular thing and say, yes, I'd do that different. But she's even

> hesitating about, well, I've done this, I've done that and that contributed towards going on. So I tried then to suggest some things she could do as an alternative. ... It was serious and it was a major point. (lines 1122-1123, 1124-1127, 1135-1142, 1145, Conference transcript)

Brian was clearly critical of the way he handled this part of the conference discussion. What lay at the root of this self-criticism was the nagging doubt that his point about time loss, as serious and major as he considered it to be, had not got through to the teacher. One possible reason for that lies in his response to the teacher's suggestion "they like to return their own". Far from challenging this view which essentially underpinned the unfortunate episode in the lesson, Brian engages in a tangential discussion of which pupil started the desk-washing escapade. As interesting as that may seem, it distracts the emphasis from the essential point about classroom organization long enough for the conference focus to change to a discussion of the teacher's pacing.

Brian initiates this change by suggesting that less time would have been lost if Audrey had worked through the concepts and activities at a more rapid pace. Audrey responds that to do that, she would have to teach the pupils to simplify their drawing on the slates (each pupil was expected to draw a number of circles on the chalk slate appropriate to the question on the six times table posed by the teacher). She finds that the pupils get involved in elaborate drawings of mice (instead of simple circles) and that holds up the pace of the lesson because "they could spend half an hour making six mice" (line 317, Conference transcript). In the recall interview, the principal admitted to being thrown by the teacher's non-sequitur at this point.

> I couldn't understand this mouse bit, this threw me. They weren't drawing mice! I'm sure if they had to draw six mice it would have taken forever. But they weren't! ... The delay wasn't the drawing. The delay was in her insisting on looking at everyone's slate before she went on to the next step. (lines 1193-1195, 1202-1204, Conference transcript)

He felt that the teacher has blamed the pupils for the delay and he consciously tried to switch the discussion focus back to the teacher's classroom management. In the conference Brian suggests that Audrey check for pupil understanding on a more random basis (rather than every pupil) as a way of quickening the pace of the lesson. He reinforces this suggestion by noting that the cramped physical arrangement of the room (thirty pupils in six rows) does not allow for rapid teacher movement around the room. Audrey picks up on Brian's point about room arrangement to relate what she has tried in the form of rearrangement. But she has always had to come back to the set-up she has so that all pupils can see what is happening. At this point, the conference discussion takes an unexpected turn. Principal Brian begins to discuss a different kind of slate (without chalk) which may be good for Audrey to try in the sense that it would obviate the need for the distribution and collection of chalk and dusters (and the potential then for

pupils wanting to clean themselves and their desks). However, his comments in the recall interview criticised this discussion, which had begun as a genuine attempt on his part to give the teacher a solid suggestion, as irrelevant and tangential to the main point, i.e., the teacher's classroom management. (Ironically, this discussion about an alternative slate was one of the two points which Audrey picked up on as excellent suggestions.)

In the conference discussion Brian reverts the focus to the teacher's classroom management by asking her how she normally organizes the class for mathematics. Audrey responds by describing how she introduces concepts to the total group and then divides the class into three groups for pupils to work on activities designed for their level. After discussing addition and subtraction, the principal and teacher begin to explore her teaching of division. Brian is interested in knowing whether Audrey is teaching single digit division to the class. In the recall interview Brian explained his purpose here. He was trying to establish just how complicated the math situation is in Audrey's class since he was of the view that single digit division should have been addressed in the previous grade. Brian reported suspecting that Audrey perceives classroom and pupil-related matters to be more complicated than they actually are. Accordingly, Brian asks Audrey in the conference if she is using the subtractive method in teaching division. This question, answered courteously by Audrey in the conference, brought forth a pointed reaction in her recall interview. She felt strongly that a principal should know the general principles -- as distinct from the specific details -- on which the teaching of division at the grade three level is predicated. She admitted to being frustrated and disappointed with the principal over what she saw as his lack of knowledge and pedagogical understanding. She reported that it is terribly important for the principal to know what is going on in classrooms and to understand the general principles undergirding the teaching of curriculum concepts at each grade level. Audrey's frustration on this point coalesced around her view that Brian is always so busy on other matters that it is impossible for teachers to educate him to what is happening in classrooms.

In the conference Brian turns to giving more supportive feedback. He tells how he was impressed by the pupils' attentiveness to the lesson, even if they were, at times, perhaps overly enthusiastic (the pupils cheered one another for correct answers). He also praises the teacher's presentation and expression, particularly the idea of starting out using a felt board and concrete objects to illustrate the concept of six. At the same time he questions whether Audrey really needed to go up to seven rows of six objects because forty-two objects are difficult to see and by that point the concept of six has been clearly illustrated. Brian suggests that she could use a strip of six stickers instead of concrete objects for the later rows of the times table. In the recall interview Audrey reported thinking that this represented a useful way of gaining time in the presentation phase of the lesson.

The conference draws to a close with Brian asking Audrey if she would change anything next time she teaches. Audrey responds by saying that she

would like to speed up the distribution of the lesson props (in this case, the slates) but she is not sure whether using pupil monitors would in fact achieve that end. In the recall interview, the principal fastened on to the first part of this response and reported thinking that the teacher has finally got to the point of recognizing the need to speed things up. In the conference, Brian attempts to reinforce this point by probing whether she would also want to speed up the pace of the lesson. Audrey's response is that she would not quicken the pace with the pupils she has. This retort had an incredulous effect on the principal in the recall interview. Having earlier opined that she had finally recognized the point, he now realized that that view was premature; for the connection between the distribution of lesson props and the pace of instruction has been essentially lost on the teacher. In her recall interview, the teacher sheds some light on why she would not be in favour of quickening the pace of the lesson. All pupils except two, according to her, were on modified programs the previous year and did not begin regular curriculum work until late. Moreover, she reported, on Mondays (the day of the lesson observed) the pupils are always slow after a week-end of little sleep and next to no English spoken at home. In her view, twenty-five out of the thirty pupils in the class do not know English very well. The point about the children being half asleep on Mondays Audrey makes with Brian in the conference. One can only conclude that a serious educational problem exists in the class or that the teacher is using her diagnosis of pupils' ability to rationalize her own reluctance to change her approach to the management of lesson materials with its consequent effect on the pace of the lesson.

Post-Interview: Audrey

This interview began again with the question: "Are there any final comments you would like to make about the conference?" Probing was only undertaken in response to comments volunteered by the participant. In Audrey's case, she chose to comment on the two excellent suggestions she had picked up (one about using a different kind of slate which did not need chalk and therefore would appear to be easier to distribute and one about using strips of six stickers instead of concrete objects to illustrate the concept of six in the six times table). Both of these suggestions she was prepared to try in a subsequent lesson. She also reported that entering into a supervision experience like the one she had had with Brian would help her to try new approaches in the classroom. At the same time, she did not primarily seek help around the needs of individual (ESL) pupils from the principal who, in her view, has difficulty finding time for supervision, but from other teachers who dealt with such problems on a day-to-day basis. This point notwithstanding, Audrey did not feel that Brian was being unduly critical of her and characterized the supervisory relationship between them as satisfactory though not rewarding. She reported having trust in Brian as a person and felt that the trust was robust enough to withstand strong suggestions about her teaching made by the principal -- but quickly added that that did not constitute his supervisory style. Audrey ended the recall interview with the suggestion that the question of why she was once placed on extended leave would, if pursued, reveal important

background information about her. When invited to comment further, however, she declined, except to say that it had happened more than five years previously in a different school with a different principal.

Post-Interview: Brian

Brian began his post-interview without even waiting for the initiating question. Immediately following the videotape of the conference, Brian expressed his disappointment in his own conferencing performance and also in Audrey's teaching:

> (sighs) Oh dear. That was a rather poor show, I think, on my part. I mean, I'm not sure who's in worse shape looking at that again and thinking about it, going through with the lesson. I didn't expect a lesson built around the six times table, I honestly didn't. She had been hesitating about what she was going to do and she'd more or less decided that, because I had kind of asked her this time to do a show ... and I gave her a sheet and told her to outline the goals and objectives, because that's different from what I've normally practised. She felt maybe at one point it would be better just to stick to what she did as a routine. I said ok, if that's what you're more comfortable with, follow through. Well as we came in ... she announced, "You're seeing an arithmetic lesson this morning." Oh good, that was it, and I couldn't believe it like I, I kept waiting for when are you getting to what you're going to teach. And it turned out that that was it. It was the six times table. And I don't think I ever recovered really from the idea that here we had been treated to something she really seriously presented as a lesson. So it was hard to know. I'm trying too hard not to put her on the defensive. But I really should have pinned her up against the wall a little more on some of these things. (lines 1506-1519, 1521-1531, Conference transcript)

This sense of disappointment, combined with the advantage of the reflection made possible through seeing a re-run of the conference (a process in which he could have engaged with a focus on the lesson's data between the observation and the conference but chose not to do so), prompted the principal to relate how he would conference differently the next time:

> I guess I'd have to go in and start off by just telling her how ... I was very disappointed with what I saw there. I thought she was capable of putting on a better [show] and that, in fact, if she meant that as a demonstration of (1) her best teaching technique and (2) her grasp of the kids' needs, then I figure we have a serious problem. But I'd have to start off by saying I'm really disappointed. Now I couldn't have brought myself to say that, maybe it's my personality, a problem I've got to work on, but I couldn't have brought myself to say that at the outset of this [conference].

(lines 1545-1555, Conference transcript)

Brian would wish to change his approach from one in which he emits subtle cues for the teacher to think about to one in which he becomes much more direct:

> On those little things that I've tried to pick on before, if I do it subtly or sort of in an obtuse way with her, we get sidetracked. She's great ... [at] diverting the conversation to something else. Whether it's intentional or whether it's just something that happens, I don't know, so I figure there is only one way. Get right to what I want to talk about, not allow any possibility for diverting the attention from what she knows is coming and that's to get to it right off. That has to be the way. I've taken too long to get to that point. (lines 1578-1587, Conference transcript)

Despite this statement, Brian reported being convinced that subtle cues can and do work with intelligent teachers but that, in this case, he has allowed too many diversions onto irrelevant topics. He credited Audrey with being an intelligent woman who picks up on subtleties -- "my humour is a little subtle occasionally and she picks [it] up" (lines 1601-1602, Conference transcript) -- but saw a specific, situationally-based need to make an exception to his normally supportive and subtle approach to supervision. When questioned about why he thought Audrey, as a highly intelligent teacher, had masked any evidence of picking up on cues which went to the heart of her classroom management practices, Brian responded that in his view, the teacher's problems were caused neither by incompetence nor by an inability to grasp what was being implied but by a false perception of reality as it pertained to the learning needs of the pupils in her class. As an example of this, Brian cited another activity which he had wanted to raise with the teacher. The activity had the pupils write out the six times table in their notebooks and then do it again on flashcards (a particular predilection of this teacher). Brian had wanted to discuss this activity in terms of its implications for use of instructional time but chose not to do so because he felt the teacher would have defended it as reinforcement of the learning process. At the same time, Brian admitted that he had not supervised this teacher often enough (his typical routine did not allow him the time required) to begin to address this "false perception of reality", as he termed it. However, he basically believed that intelligent people like Audrey can be brought around but that it requires commitment of time and energy to a long process. This supervision experience had given him a strong signal that he must look very thoroughly at other aspects of Audrey's teaching.

LOW PCL-LOW TCL DYAD: PRINCIPAL BOB AND TEACHER JOSHUA

Within the larger study, there were three dyads in the low PCL-low TCL set. Again, the within and between comparative analyses revealed similarities not

only in the content and supervisory strategies among the low CL principals, but also in the responses of the low CL teachers. The particular dyad selected for inclusion in this paper was chosen because it brings together a teacher in his first year at the school and a principal who, of the three in this set, had been at the school for the longest period of time. Underlying this choice was a finding from the larger study which suggested that there was a direct relationship between the number of years the principals had been in their present schools and the improvement in teachers' classroom management performance.

Bob has a total of eleven years of experience as an administrator, two of which were as an elementary school vice-principal and nine as an elementary school principal, all within his present district. He has been principal of his present school for three years during the last one of which he has worked with his participating teacher.

Joshua has a total of seven years of teaching experience, of which one year was at the primary level (grades 1-3), one at intermediate (grades 4-7), and five in a middle school (grades 6-8). Relative to the whole sample of 15 teachers, he was classified as "less experienced". This was his first year in in his present school.

Teacher 07: "Joshua"

At the time of the observations, Josh was teaching a split grade six-seven class of 24 pupils. The first observed lesson included both Language Arts in Josh's regular classroom and Social Studies in the school library. The second observation was a mathematics lesson held in Josh's regular classroom.

The qualitative data collected by the two project observers revealed problems in Josh's management of transitions, rules and procedures, room arrangement, and instruction. Underlying the deficiencies in all of these management dimensions was Josh's excessive tolerance of inappropriate pupil behaviour.

Pupil Behaviour: First Observation

There was an extensive amount of non-task related behaviour in both the classroom and the library.[8] While Josh was reading a story from a stationary position at the front of the classroom, numerous pupils were whispering to one another, often drawing the attention of pupils who had ostensibly been listening to

---

[8] The project observers had been scheduled to observe the whole Language Arts lesson. Unfortunately, they were given an incorrect time for the classroom visit; thus the ten minute segment.

the story. At no time did Josh respond to the obvious auditory cues of off-task behaviour nor did he visually scan the class to ensure pupil engagement.

When the class moved to the school library to work on their Social Studies projects, there was initially a high rate of engagement. However, the off-task behaviour began to escalate, particularly when the principal had initiated a conversation with Josh shortly after their arrival in the library. Throughout this 15 minute exchange, the class was left unmonitored. During this time, some pupils were working well on their own, but others were engaged in activities such as comparing cereal box picture cards and gossiping about someone's appearance. Yet others were wandering, apparently aimlessly, around the library, reading magazines, and straightening the books on the library shelves. One boy was kneeling on the floor balancing a chair on his back; a girl was playfully bumping another's head with a book. If Josh were aware of any of these behaviours, he took no corrective action. As had been noticed in the short Language Arts segment, he used no visual scanning and very little purposeful circulation either to ensure task-related behaviour or to check pupil progress. When he did circulate, Josh tended to do so for very brief intervals (all were less than one minute) interspersed with much longer intervals (typically three to five minutes) during which he was involved exclusively with one pupil or a small group of pupils.

Pupil Behaviour: Second Observation

This same pattern of extensive off-task behaviour was also evident in the second lesson. Again, there was little reaction by the teacher to pupil misbehaviour of any kind. Indeed, during the seatwork segment of the math lesson, four pupils actually left the room and subsequently had a friendly shoving match in the doorway. About seven or eight others were wandering around the classroom and in and out of the cloakroom. Josh seemed not to notice these "extra-curricular" activities or, if he did, did nothing to indicate they were not acceptable. Because the inappropriate pupil behaviour not only increased the noise level in the classroom, but also escalated to the point of involving previously on-task pupils, Josh's lack of corrective action could not be interpreted as a sound "judgment call". Indeed, the ongoing inattentiveness and steady undercurrent of pupil chatter detracted from a well-sequenced presentation of fractions, ratios, and proportions.

Both observers commented that Josh used the pupils' prior knowledge of fractions to explain ratios as "fractions turned sideways" (e.g., $4/8 = 1/2 = 1:2$) and proportions as equal ratios (e.g., $4:8 = 1:2$). The difficulty which pupils subsequently experienced in answering questions on a worksheet was the result, not of any lack in the logical connections among the concepts, but rather of the extensive and, virtually unchallenged, off-task behaviour during the presentation. Given Josh's approach to managing pupil behaviour during both presentations and seatwork, it was not surprising that he also had problems with transitions.

Transitions: First Observation

The first transition came as Josh finished reading the *Gift of the Magi* to his class. He gave some rather vague instructions that the pupils were to think about an ending to the story for their lesson the next day. Neither observer was clear as to whether the pupils were to prepare a new ending for the story or just ponder how the story did end. Apart from the lack of specificity in his instructions, Josh did not have the full attention of the class when he gave them. He then told the class to get ready to go to the library to work on their projects. The pupils seemed familiar with the routine of organizing the materials they would need in the library and of lining up to move there as a group. Perhaps this familiarity obviated the need for either any alerting cues prior to giving the pre-transition instructions or any circulation during the time the pupils were preparing to change classrooms. Whether or not the subsequent off-task behaviour in the library was attributable to the lack of specific directions regarding the project work or to a lack of circulation prior to the transition itself to ensure that all pupils would be gainfully occupied is a matter of speculation.

Transitions: Second Observation

The second observation, which spanned about 90 minutes, took place entirely in Josh's regular classroom. These logistics provided a much better opportunity to observe his management of transitions. As was the case in the first observation, Josh did not consistently ensure pupil adherence to the pre-transition instructions by actively monitoring the class. Instead of first gaining full attention from the class, giving them the required instructions, and then circulating (or at least scanning) to ensure that the instructions were being carried out, Josh gave instructions and circulated simultaneously. Moreover, the instructions he gave while circulating referred not only to the transition, but also to the next activity. Because he made no clear distinction between transitions and structured activities, there appeared to be considerable pupil confusion. Some were still working on the previous activity; some were carrying out the transitions; and some were beginning the new activity. He used no alerting cues before adding further instructions in an attempt to clarify the earlier ones, nor did he adhere consistently to the time warnings he gave for ending activities. Josh gave no finish-up reminders or advance warnings prior to the school bell signalling recess. As the bell rang, he told the class to "hold it" and continued to talk about correcting the math worksheets. As he was doing so, ten pupils stood up, soon followed by the rest of the class. While Josh was still talking, the class dismissed itself for recess. The second observed lesson made clear that this teacher did not plan his transitions with the same care he gave to his instruction. This lack of planning, together with an excessive tolerance of off-task behaviour, seriously eroded the amount of productive learning time.

Rules and Procedures: First and Second Observations

That Josh did have rules and procedures in place was evident not only in the lining-up to leave both the classroom and the library, but also in the written displays on the chalkboard in his own classroom. For example, he had listed the names of pupil monitors for various duties and had posted the current homework assignments. The problem, once again, arose not from the non-existence of such rules and procedures, but from Josh's inconsistent enforcement of the ones that did exist. For instance, Josh reminded the class on several occasions of the rule requiring that they raise their hands to answer, but tolerated frequent call-outs during the math presentation. Prior to the seatwork activity, he indicated that he would "come around" to check their work. Almost immediately, he was surrounded by many pupils asking him to look at their worksheet answers. Again Josh accepted, without comment, this direct contradiction of his request. When he reminded the class about the procedure for exchanging papers, two pupils promptly stood up and walked across the classroom to give their papers to their chosen markers. Once again, Josh took no corrective action of any kind.

The project observers also expressed some concern regarding the potential danger inherent in a procedure whereby pupils were asked to sit atop the back of their desks to signal completion of their work. As had been the case in the library, no work-related back-up activities seemed to exist for earlier finishers. This was yet another source of the general commotion and hub-bub which characterized both observed lessons.

Room Arrangement: First and Second Observations

The arrangement of the library tables, carrells, and free-standing book racks and shelves made it impossible to see the whole class from any one position in the room. Thus, to monitor effectively both pupil progress and behaviour, active circulation was necessary. Although Josh did circulate (after his 15 minute conversation with the principal), he did not do so frequently enough to maintain a business-like, task-oriented work environment.

In Josh's own classroom, pupil desks were arranged in six rows of five desks each. There was very little space between the desks at the front of each row and the chalkboard, yet this was a main traffic area for the teacher and for the pupils coming and going from their places to put answers on the board. The congestion was increased by the presence of a large rectangular table on which Josh kept teaching materials and supplies. Although there was a sufficiently wide aisle between each row of desks to permit jostle-free movement, the aisle space itself was not clear.

While the design of the pupil desks provided storage space for personal belongings, that space was apparently not adequate. To alleviate the problem, each pupil had a storage box beneath the seat of his or her desk. Since the pupils seemed to have frequent need for the materials stored in them, the boxes jutted out into the aisles thus creating not only a potentially dangerous "obstacle

course" between the rows of desks, but also considerable congestion in the traffic lanes. This situation merely exacerbated further the general impression of lack of order and control in Josh's classroom.

Instruction: Second Observation

The preceeding sections decribing Josh's deficient classroom management skills have documented that the underlying problem was his inconsistent monitoring and excessive tolerance of pupil behaviour contrary to his specific directions and established procedures. While this general inattentiveness fragmented the flow and continuity of Josh's teaching, there were at least two other reasons for the lack of smoothness and momentum in the math lesson. First, Josh had not adequately prepared the ratio and proportions worksheet for seatwork.[9] This lack of preparation resulted in his dictating items to the class to place on the worksheet. Because of the noise level and despite his ignored requests for quiet, there were numerous requests to repeat items. Moreover, the pupils had to flip the sheet in order to find the information needed to answer the questions printed on the reverse side. Further commotion ensued as the pupils asked one another for the facts needed to complete the ratios and proportions rather than continually having to flip the sheet.

Second, the level of difficulty of the worksheet questions was such that about one third of the class finished well before the remainder. These early finishers did not seem to have anything else of an academic nature to do. This, together with what appeared to be a wide range of math ability in the class, suggests the need for greater variety in the seatwork materials and for more careful planning by the teacher.

Bob-Joshua (107-07) Conference Case Study #1

The Bob-Joshua conference revolves around a general discussion of the unit of work in which the language arts and library research lesson constituted component parts. The conference begins with an opening review by principal Bob. He tells Joshua that the teacher's daybook contains much evidence of good planning, that he as principal likes the idea of reading difficult stories out loud to intermediate pupils and also likes the higher-order questions that the teacher uses to elicit analysis, production and high level thought in pupils. Bob also notes that the pupils were on task right away in the library research assignment and infers that the pupils clearly knew what was expected of them by the teacher. Bob concludes this review with reference to the good rapport evident between Joshua and the class ("a good bunch") which he sees solidified through Josh's willingness

---

[9]Josh explained to the project observers after the lesson that an early morning staff meeting had run later than expected and had thus upset his planning time.

to work with individual pupils and help them in a formative way.

Bob then turns the conference discussion to focus on the cognitive level of the topic and materials in the lesson observed. He opens up discussion with an eliciting question: "Why did you choose governments, you know governments, the way they govern, why did you do that?" (lines 64-66, Conference transcript). Joshua responds that he wants the pupils to become aware of the many forms of government operative around the world in order to compare other systems with the Canadian system of parliamentary democracy. In so doing he sees the pupils as coming to make a sound value judgment about their own system of government and to have a grasp of how citizens provide input into the Canadian government. Bob poses an apprising question (information passed on in the form of a question): "Do you think they can conceptualize that?" (line 85, Conference transcript). Although also posed as a yes-no question, it apprises the teacher of the principal's concern that this topic may be above the pupils' cognitive level. Josh, however, argues that it is important that the pupils understand how the governmnet works, particularly if there is an election in the next year. Bob comes back to his point about cognitive level:

> But I have a question in my own mind and that's why I asked you that because, conceptually, it's like law, philosophy and other things, it's a very difficult sort of concept to get a hold on. (lines 96-100, Conference transcript)

Josh acknowledges the difficulty but suggests that he is willing to attempt it even if he fails. Having acknowledged the difficulty, however, he then quickly talks about what he will do rather than address the question of the cognitive level of the topic. Josh describes how he has planned a visit to the local law court and how he is proceeding to set up a mock trial. The court authorities are sending Josh a package of materials which contain three possible topics for such a trial. Principal Bob is pleased with this attempt at a simulation and appears to forget his original concern about the cognitive difficulty. Indeed, he reverts back to commenting on pupil on-task behaviour:

> So that covered the planning and the activities that were going on in the classroom management thing. You know, it was kind of neat the way they went down stairs and picked their own work place. There were some at the carrels, they couldn't work with the group, and some went into the group thing. By and large they were pretty much on task. (lines 118-123, Conference transcript)

This change of focus is surprising, given that Bob began attempting to engage Josh in dialogue about the difficulty level of the topic approximately forty seconds earlier in the conference (line 96 in the transcript). It is also not clear whether the first sentence of the above citation indicates a connection in Bob's mind between the cognitive level of difficulty of the topic and the teacher's classroom

management practices, or whether it represents merely a bridge to his next comments about pupil on-task behaviour. What is clear is that the focus on cognitive difficulty is a fleeting one.

The conference focus appears then to switch to pupils' task behaviour during the library research activity. However, Bob's positive comments here are essentially a precursor to a further concern. The interchange in the dialogue at this point is revealing:

> P: There's the odd one that wasn't, uhm, pupils were assisting each other and, uhm, you were walking around assisting them as you could, you know, they were getting a lot of work done. If I did have one concern, that might be with the grade sevens, uhm, where, uhm, I don't think . . . [T interrupts]
>
> T: They're in between doing an activity and handing, they're to hand in an assignment . . . [P interrupts]
>
> P: We might be running out of conference time . . . [T continues on]
>
> T: They're handing in their assignment and once they've handed it in, it's kind of fun for them because they can toss it to me like a hot potato and I give them something else to do verbally. (lines 124-135, Conference transcript)

Because Josh interrupts Bob before the latter has fully articulated his concern, it is not clear whether the principal is focussing on the on-task behaviour of the grade seven students, on the structuring of their assignment or on both. As it is, the teacher seems to deflect the focus to the procedure he uses for handing in assignments which then prompts the principal to discuss how the work is marked. In the course of this brief discussion, it is established that the teacher is marking regularly and the principal expresses his approval. Within two minutes of conference dialogue, Bob has come from a tentative broaching of a concern about the grade sevens to emiting praise for the basic expectation that teachers mark the work they assign.

Principal Bob then turns to raising a concern about Josh's cooperative planning and teaching with the librarian during library research periods. The dialogue again reveals a similar pattern of the principal broaching the concern tentatively, the teacher deflecting it, and the principal then appearing to be easily satisified with what the teacher says:

> P: I had a little bit of a concern, uhm, and I'm raising it with you, although I wish Jennifer [librarian] were here. Uhm, I didn't see her

down there until the very end, she, now is this now, you did cooperative planning but . . . [T interrupts]

T: We do the cooperative planning [both speak at once]

P: But is this cooperative teaching?

T: Yes, we do, but she was organizing for our display up here, occasionally this happens. You know, she's got those on-going things, it's sort of a juggling act for her. You know, she's been very, very supportive. Super person.

P: Ok. So does she get involved in the evaluation too?

T: Yes, she offered to before, then she was ill the day of the hand-in but she will do it.

P: So how do you work together on that?

T: We talk about it.

P: Does she have one thing to do and you another?

T: No, we just talk about the criterion we're looking for and how many mark we're going to assign to each section and then we go ahead and we'll do one together and then it's sort of like a diving judgment. You watch the diving, the divers and you calibrate and then you adjust, you watch another round of dives and then you start the actual competition.

P: Good analogy to use. (lines 152-179, Conference transcript)

Bob is here attempting to address the question of cooperative planning and teaching between the librarian and Joshua. The teacher once again jumps in before the concern is fully articulated. This time, however, Bob perseveres and finishes his sentence. Joshua alludes to the fact that the lack of cooperative teaching in the lesson observed is an unfortunate exception. When Bob pursues the point about the librarian's involvement in the evaluation process, Josh explains the misfortune that has prevented her involvement. At this point, Bob uses an apprising question to orient Josh to this understanding of cooperative planning and teaching: "So, how do you *work together* on that?" (line 169). Josh's response does not appear to address fully the emphasis in Bob's question. Consequently, the principal poses the question: "Does she have one thing to do and you

another?" (line 171). This is a focussing question in the sense that it directs the teacher to a specific action but is partial in the sense that it does not provide two or three alternatives for the teacher to choose from. The question has the effect of causing Josh to talk about what he and the librarian do when they work together on the evaluation of pupils' library research assignments. And yet he talks about it not directly but by analogy, an analogy which seems to satisfy the principal's concern. The appropriateness and relevance of the analogy to Bob's larger concern about cooperative planning and teaching seem to go unquestioned. Instead, principal Bob chooses to pursue a different aspect of the library research period.

Bob is concerned that during a typical library research period, the pupils are tempted to copy directly from the encyclopedia instead of searching out all the available information. Indeed, he relates how his observation revealed that the majority of the pupils were only using one source. Essentially, Bob wants to find out what structure is provided to guide the pupils in such an activity. Josh's response reveals no definite structure; rather, he argues that he brings in other reference books (he has a whole series of National Geographic magazines dating back to 1955 in his classroom) but that he cannot force pupils to use them. Bob chooses to pursue the point: "How will you know that that, uh, they have used them?" (line 196, Conference transcript). This task-orienting question forces Josh to face the question of what he is having the pupils do in such an activity. The teacher's response is that the bibliographies will show the different books the pupil have used. The principal's "yes, but" comment seems to draw out of Joshua an admission that he is not an expert on all of the countries the class is studying and therefore he cannot always tell whether the information has been copied from only one source. Principal Bob sharpens the focus:

P: If I were to use the culturgram or encyclopedia, I'd get my thousand words out of it and then just add a couple of names to the title.

T: I think that, uh, the kids asked me about that and I made no bones about it that they could beat the system that way but that they will never learn to go beyond what they do. But I can say that every kid has been into the National Geographic once and they look for an article for every kid, and that's the best I can do, and whether the child actually did use it or not, well that's, that's something I don't know how I can structure that any differently. (lines 205-216, Conference transcript)

Having contended that it is the pupils' loss if they act the way the principal suggests, Joshua points out that all pupils have been into at least one volume of the National Geographic magazine. The basic point about activity structure is one he eventually addresses, admitting that he does not know how he could structure the library research assignment differently. Bob does not let the opportunity pass:

P: You might want to use Jennifer [librarian] on that too. She would know if they were pawning them or plagiarizing or getting something from somewhere else. Why don't, why do the kids take notes from the encyclopedia? Surely maybe, maybe the first time around they look at the encyclopedia and get an overview [from the teacher] if they're not allowed to bring books in . . .

T: That's a good thought, I never thought of doing that that way, that's, that's something . . .

P: Then, they might know the direction they're going, they might have read a little bit about it but they're only allowed, maybe, to take notes from other texts.

T: That's an idea. (lines 234-247, Conference transcript)

This seems to represent a change in strategy on Bob's part. Instead of raising questions, the principal now adopts a directive orientation. This he does, presumably, because the teacher has admitted a fairly serious lacuna and he as principal must provide some guidance as to how things can be done differently. The idea of an overview or advance organizer is merely stated and readily accepted by the teacher.

The foregoing episode would seem to illustrate a principal successfully changing from a facilitating to a directive supervisory orientation when the teacher seemed unable or unwilling to respond to cues and hints about the teaching-learning situation. A close examination of the principal's next statements, however, reveals this not to be the case:

> Well, whatever you and Jennifer decide on, anyhow, those are my only two concerns really, maybe that's the third with the structure required for the grade sevens, but you got a lot accomplished and the kids were on-task, they knew what was expected obviously, you put a lot of work into it. (lines 248-252, Conference transcript)

Having put forward a suggestion which the teacher acknowledged to be a useful one, Bob then immediately adds the corollary that the teacher and the librarian can decide whether to implement it or not. By itself, this could have been an appropriate way of allowing choice after a fairly directive suggestion but, taken in concert with the positive comments about pupil on-task behaviour and teacher planning, it tends to convey the impression that the lack of structure for the grade seven library research activity was not that consequential. For a teacher who has had difficulty responding in a straightforward fashion to the principal's predominantly facilitative orientation, this could undermine the potency of the

suggestion for structuring the activity next time.

The conference ends with Bob asking the teacher whether there is anything he (Josh) wishes to add. Josh is quick to respond:

> I covered my questioning, uhm, difficult to evaluate a teacher's talk time in that time that you saw, very difficult. I was a litle sorry that you couldn't have come in a little earlier, you would have got a much better flavour of the class. (lines 257-260, Conference transcript)

Since neither participant commented on this in their respective recall interviews, it is difficult to establish what the teacher's intent is here and what kind of effect this statement had on the principal. On the surface, it would appear that Josh uses the opportunity to attempt to influence Bob's supervisory judgment and also to communicate mild criticism of the principal's tardiness. After further elaboration of what will take place during the planned mock trial, the conference comes to closure without any definite action plan on the three concerns raised by the principal.

Post-Interview: Joshua

This interview always began with the question: "Are there any final comments you would like to make about the conference?" Probing was only undertaken by the interviewer if the participant chose to elaborate on the conference and made comments which needed clarification. In Joshua's case, the only comment he wished to make was that it was a good conference and that he enjoyed considerable rapport with Bob, his principal.

Post-Interview: Bob

Bob began his responses by articulating an important assumption underpinning his supervisory practice, namely, that every teacher on his staff is capable and competent but that growth is possible. Consequently, he reported attempting always to emphasize supportive, positive feedback such that his style represented a facilitative rather than autocratic orientation. Bob considered this emphasis to be essential for he regarded teachers, not principals, as the experts in curriculum.

> I tend to stay out of teacher's hair. Some people don't like it, some do, but I take the view that teachers are professional and they've got to have room to move, and I don't believe in autocratic leadership in all cases.

> There are times I do use it but when it comes to the curriculum and what they do in their classroom, I'm inclined to give them a fair bit of latitude. And I don't come in and say: "This is what you will do or this is what you won't do." I'm more inclined to question what they do and whether it fits the school goals but you know you've got to involve your own style and if I jump in there, that's no way to do it. So I give them a fair bit of latitude and that's part of what I want back from them is what they're doing and why they're doing it and if they can justify it and it's rational and it's clear, I'm satisfied . . . I don't believe in imposing myself in certain areas and others. One I don't impose is in the curriculum area, I might if they [the teachers] aren't following the required curricula but there's still enough scope within it that they can still do their own thing within that general context. . . . Now sometimes there are general school concerns and it's a different kind of supervision I suppose, uhm, which fall [sic] in my bailiwick, uhm, one has to do, I suppose, with decisions on what kind of report cards we use and this kind of thing. (lines 410-424, 429-434, 442-446, Conference transcript)

Bob's approach is not to impose his views in curriculum areas. His preferred style is that of facilitator but his conception of facilitation seems to equate to a "laissez-faire" or "hands-off" approach. Only in general supervision of school affairs, as distinct from instructional affairs, is he prepared to enter into a more rigorous dialogue with teachers.

Bob-Joshua (107-07) Conference Case Study #2

This second conference begins in similar fashion to the first one. Principal Bob conducts an opening review in which he commends the teacher for class control during a time test and its subsequent in-class marking. Teacher Joshua explains how he uses gifts of time as a motivator to get the class to monitor itself. If the pupils pay attention and cooperate, they gain free time for Friday afternoon, if they are noisy and uncooperative, they lose free time. While he does not explain the criteria upon which judgments to allocate or disallow free time are made, Josh reveals that the pupils had been particularly unruly the day before, losing thirty-five minutes of their allocated forty minutes of free time, and were on their best behaviour today trying to make amends. This, he reports, they did to the tune of re-gaining twenty-five minutes. Bob is pleased that Josh is teaching the class self-discipline in this way and Josh adds that he puts the free time allocation on the board to reinforce the pupils in their behaviour, concluding: "Oh, we did do this well" (line 43, Conference transcript). Bob then concludes this opening review by introducing the main body of the lesson about ratio and proportion. In so doing, he compliments Josh on his definition of ratio as a "side-ways fraction" and on his use of the chalkboard with pupils during instruction.

These compliments not only conclude the opening review but also lead into the principal's first concern. Bob raises the question of pupil interjections during the lesson, specifically apprising him about one pupil:

> Uhm, and your toleration zone for how much [sic] interjections and humour and other stuff. Have you given any thought to Cody? (lines 60-63, Conference transcript)

Josh responds that he has talked to the pupil in question about his behaviour and also told him that the principal has observed him behaving in such a disruptive manner. In the recall interview, Josh reported being consumed by the pressure of having to integrate two emotionally disturbed children that he hardly notices that a bright pupil is continually calling out:

> I have two emotionally disturbed children in the classroom. They take up quite a bit of my energy and my monitoring, so Cody is sort of lost in the shuffle. He's a bright boy, a very bright boy. He's a little hyper. He has this habit of just interjecting and he's, there's no harm in it, he's just, this is his style of learning and he's very evocative, you know. If he's happy you know and if he's sad he's going to destroy your lesson. So he, Cody, was into the lesson and really into it . . . and he [Bob] is saying, well why, you know, did you notice he [Cody] was doing that? Well, quite frankly, no! I was worried about Laird and Wade [pupils being mainstreamed] that they weren't doing too many untoward things, but there's where part of my mind was. (lines 73-81, 84-87, Conference transcript)

Two points are of interest here. First, despite his report that he was unaware of the pupil continually interjecting, Josh has nevertheless talked with the pupil and informed him that his disruptive behaviour was observed by the principal. Second, despite relating that he has talked with the pupil about the calling-out behaviour, Josh claimed that the pupil's behaviour was harmless. In the conference, this latter point (and not the point about the teacher being consumed by the two emotionally disturbed children) emerges. Josh attempts to play down Cody's behaviour, suggesting that "he's a nice kid" (line 97, Conference transcript). The principal counters this with his own characterization: "He's got a bit of a temper" (line 98, Conference transcript). The teacher is nevertheless confident he can handle this pupil:

> You can fun him out of any, just about any situation. So it has to be a pretty severe situation [for the pupil to display his temper]. I don't know, I like him, he's redeemable. (lines 101-104, Conference transcript)

Although Josh's faith in the pupil in question is laudable, it is noteworthy that he proposes no structure or management procedure which will enable him to "redeem" this pupil's behaviour. Equally noteworthy is the fact that the principal appears

not to recognize the seriousness of this omission.

Far from pursuing possible preventive management strategies for pupil interjections, principal Bob chooses to raise his main concern about the teacher's "quantum leap" into the cognitive unknown during the lesson:

> Now, ah, the business of what I call the quantum jump where suddenly you were making comparisons and that had never come into the discussion of what ratio and proportion are, and here we are comparing. Have given it some thought? (lines 107-111, Conference transcript)

Josh rejoins that he has not really had time to think about the lesson but suggests that it is entirely possible that he could have made a jump during the lesson. He goes on to explain what he tried to do:

> I tried to sit down and put it out as sequentially as I thought they could grasp [it]. sometimes I'll make a jump and even if they don't catch it, I'll go back over it. I think in this case it didn't hurt them to make a bit of a jump. . . . I really prefer to shove mechanics at children first and then build on the theory by just sheer volume and going back over it and reteaching and reteaching. I find that by doing the mechanics then they're learning a skill and then learning the theory is another skill in itself and you can draw on the positive experience of doing it correctly. So if I can design my worksheets properly they'll have success. I'll build, but perhaps you're right, maybe I did make too much of a jump. I'll be able to know in the next few days. (lines 120-124, 127-135, Conference transcript)

It is interesting that Joshua cannot articulate in specific detail the sequence of instruction he had planned. As a consequence, he provisionally accepts the principal's appraisal without first finding out and critically evaluating the basis of the judgment that he had made a quantum jump. What is equally interesting is Bob's response to Josh's explanation above: "Just as long as you're aware of the jump" (line 136, Conference transcript). It would seem that Bob is similarly disinclined to examine the specifics of the instructional sequencing--an examination which would serve as an essential precursor to any commitment on the part of Josh to change his approach; rather, Bob as principal appears to be content with merely raising the teacher's awareness about the quantum leap, for he temporarily shifts the focus to a discussion of which notebooks the pupils should be using.

In looking at pupils' notebooks, Bob has observed that some are working in problem-solving books while others are using geometry books. On this basis, Bob questions Joshua about whether the lesson is mathematics or not. Josh rejoins that he allows pupils to do their problem-solving exercises in "other books" but his posited rationale for this is not altogether clear in the conference dialogue. Nevertheless, Bob does not pursue this point but chooses to revert to a focus on

the teaching of ratio and proportion. The principal is keen to know how the teacher will know that the pupils have learned the concepts. Josh explains that he will know whether the pupils have learned the concept of ratio by their being able to define what it means and to demonstrate it as a fraction:

> I'll go back and give a review just on the kind of thing I taught today, if they can, you know, understand how a ratio, what a particular, give me a definition, their own definition of a ratio, and I'm pretty liberal, you know, in their own words, and if they can relate it to a fraction. If I give them a fraction and have them demonstrate that as a ratio. If I give them some ratios and demonstrate it as a fraction and give them, uhm, some practical examples and say, now what's the ratio between this and this, then I'll know that today's lesson was a success. (lines 157-167, Conference transcript)

Bob asks whether this focus on the application of the concept of ratio will be done orally or in written form. Josh confirms that it will be a written test and provides an example (reported in the recall interview as being off the top of his head) of a fake lottery he could use to illustrate the concept of ratio through a practical demonstration of chance. This, Josh feels, would liven up an otherwise dry concept for the pupils. Bob's response to this also serves to conclude the conference:

> Well I was impressed as usual. Uhm, ordinarily, I'd take a look at your daybook or your lesson plans or something but you know I can almost see what you had [written down] . . . and with your worksheets, I don't, didn't see the need for doing that. Ok. That completes everything I intend to, need to look at for the present. (lines 188-190, 193-195, Conference transcript)

Although Bob has raised with the teacher what he as supervisor considers to be a serious concern--i.e., the quantum leap in the sequencing of Josh's presentation of the new material in the lesson--he nevertheless seems to be intent only on raising awareness and not on drawing connections between inappropriate sequencing and the potential for off-task pupil behaviour. In the final analysis, Bob gives the teacher a firm message of satisfaction with what took place in the classroom and does not attempt to develop any commitment to or action plan for improvement in the areas in which concerns had been raised and acknowledged.

Post-Interview: Joshua

Joshua's opening comments in the recall interview revealed a great deal about his inner state:

> I must say I'm feeling very relieved now. This was the fifth time Bob came in to see me. And I was evaluated three times at the school I was at last year by the principal, once at the beginning, once at the end of the year, and I asked for an evaluation in the middle because I was applying for a Vice-Principalship . . . Bob has been in for five full periods and it's just a little, I just felt a little uptight today . . . more uptight than I would like to be . . being evaluated in itself is a bit of a stress for anybody. (lines 199-204, 208-211, 214-215, Conference transcript)

Interesting, Joshua talked about the process as evaluation, as distinct from supervision. He demonstrated the low conceptual level refutational tendency of interpreting evaluation as a possible interpersonal threat and therefore stressful in a negative sense. For him, then, the experience did not facilitate development but served the purposes of administrative evaluation.

When asked by the interviewer about the thoughts he had during the discussion about the "quantum leap", Josh responded that he knew exactly what the principal was talking about.

> I took a chance in the lesson. I have a bright bunch of kids and, if I go too step by step, they'll jump ahead of me anyway. so if I make a bit of a jump when I'm introducing something or after we're rolling along and I think, oh, I'll take a gamble here, it's backfired before on me but I think you've got to be adventuresome and I've got to remember that children can learn a lot quicker than I give them credit for at times. And sometimes they can't. Now this morning it just happened that some children were at learning enrichment, one child absented himself because of his behaviour before school, he had to have time-out in another room, and that afforded a smaller group setting of twenty-four. So the lesson went much smoother than with the thirty-one size group. (lines 235-251, Conference transcript)

It would appear from Josh's response that the decision to take a chance in the lesson is not carefully calculated in planning but occurs spontaneously. Such a spontaneous decision seems to be based on the assumptions that the pupils are exceedingly bright and generally want the teacher to quicken up the instructional pacing. If these assumptions do indeed hold, it is somewhat perplexing as to why decisions about pacing and its acceleration are not deliberated upon in some way or another during the teacher's planning and preparation. This point notwithstanding, Josh felt that the lesson observed had proceeded smoothly not because the risk he took in making a quantum leap was necessarily successful but because the number of pupils in the class was considerably reduced. When asked whether the point raised by the principal about the quantum leap had been useful for him in his teaching, Josh responded that it is always helpful to be reminded of what one is doing in the classroom. When probed further, Josh maintained that the conference discussion about quantum leap was there to raise his awareness but not to make him think again about taking similar chances when

presenting new concepts and materials. At the same time, he recognized that there were times during the discussion of this point that he had interrupted Bob to give his own version of what was taking place and admitted that this probably represented defensiveness on his part.

Josh nevertheless viewed his relationship with Bob in a positive light:

> The conference speaks for the relationship and the quality of his, the thoroughness of how he goes about what he does and what he looks for. You certainly could not be slack and get by him. And I think that's evident, and I, but, on the other hand, you can see his support as a principal for what you're doing. And he's a good counsellor, he is positive. . . . Bob lets you know beforehand what he will be looking for. It's a thorough, it's almost overwhelming at first, but then you, there's nothing on a pedagogical scale, no stone's left unturned and so it's honest and open and above board, whereas that has not been my experience [previously]. (lines 306-312, 333-337, Conference transcript)

Clearly, Josh thought highly of Bob's approach to supervision even though he viewed the process more in terms of evaluation than professional development. But his appraisal was based on prior experience wherein evaluation had been conducted without professional support and conferencing. Josh saw his relationship with the principal as having developed around their dealings with the two emotionally disturbed pupils in the class. His class had been handpicked out of all the grade six classes in the city to give these children one final chance to become integrated into regular school life. If they failed to make a successful transition under Bob and Joshua, they would likely end up in hospital. Josh and his principal regularly spend about five hours a week in conference on these pupils and that has contributed to a very good working relationship.

Josh further reported that one of these disturbed children had come back into class halfway through the lesson observed and that he, as teacher, gave him individual attention for five minutes to help him catch up. When probed about what this might do for the rest of the class, Josh admitted that he was "feeling a little shaky about just handling a regular class having been away for seven years [in special education] . . . . because it's a different skill working with four or five to working with twenty-five, thirty children". (lines 349-350, 352-353, Conference transcript) This point of concern, however, did not emerge in the conference itself, possibly because the teacher perceived the whole process in terms of a professional threat posed by administrative evaluation. Relative to other experiences of this type, the supervisory intervention of Bob had much to commend it in Josh's eyes but, in the final analysis, the principal-teacher relationship was not as open as it could have been.

Post-Interview: Bob

Bob's interview began with a revealing comment. The six supervision encounters have now given him the necessary data for writing an evaluation report on Joshua:

> That was kind of interesting in that I've got all the data I need now to write his report, you know, and I know pretty well what he does in the room. Uhm, it's almost, it's almost like a summative evaluation, you know, you almost feel you're winding down. (lines 369-373, Conference transcript)

This comment would seem to corroborate the teacher's sense that this experience was essentially an evaluation process. Despite the acknowledgement that he has used the process for evaluation report writing purposes, Bob nevertheless described the lengths to which he is prepared to go in order to disarm the threat of such a process poses even to good teachers.

> The first times I go in I generally sit in the room, so the children get used to me [sic] being there and take notes on displays and how people are seated, you know, and some things about management. Just a general overview rather than centering on any lesson. And if I do that a couple of times, I get a good picture and I hope the kids feel accustomed and the teacher to me [sic] being there. And then, after that, we begin looking more discretely at lessons. (lines 383-390, Conference transcript)

When asked about the teacher's management in the specific lesson under discussion, Bob responded that he considered the pupils' interjections to be inappropriate and thought that Josh should use some behaviour modification strategy to deal with pupil responsible. Two points can be made here. First, this thought of the principal's was never explored during the conference, presumably because the teacher did not come up with the idea in the discussion. Second, this answer to a question about classroom management revealed a possible propensity on the part of the principal towards seeing management in terms of after-the-fact coping with "problem children" rather than as practices and procedures designed to prevent disruptive behaviour. Bob's further comments suggested that, although he himself was clear that calling out by some pupils was disruptive for others, he nevertheless accepted the teacher's view that this was normal behaviour for the pupil in question. As a consequence, he broached the subject in his capacity as principal not to bring about change in the teacher's practice but to raise the latter's awareness of how the classroom looked from an outsider's perpective.

Bob also talked about his misgivings regarding the teacher's quantum leap during the instruction. He reported not being able to figure out where some of the concepts had come from and questioned whether the pupils could follow what the teacher was presenting. When asked whether he was convinced that Joshua

himself knew what he was doing, Bob responded in the affirmative. However, he felt that the teacher had been in too much of a hurry, causing him to skip over the concept of comparison which should have been presented in detail. Interestingly, principal Bob reported thinking that Josh's idea of using the idea of chance to illustrate the essence of ratio and proportion would not be as successful as it could be because this was just another type of comparison for which the pupils had not been adequately prepared. It seems difficult to reconcile this incisive view expressed in the recall interview with the principal's readiness in the conference to leave unquestioned the teacher's suggestion of addressing the quantum leap concern in this way. Bob's last comments did, however, shed some light on this apparent inconsistency. When asked what he saw as the outcome of the six supervisory interventions with Joshua, principal Bob responded in the following way:

> I think Josh and I now have a pretty good talking relationship in terms of, you know, I don't go in as a destructive critic so much as, I hope, a constructive critic so that he can do better. So that I think communications is [sic] open and I think we understand where one another's coming from, so that maybe we can reach some common ground on some of these things. (lines 449-455, Conference transcript)

Raising awareness, keeping communication channels open, and finding common ground were the outcomes reported by Bob. Outcomes such as a positive impact on practice or changes in the teacher's classroom practices were not mentioned. Consequently, the inconsistency highlighted above does not prove to be a dilemma for Bob in his supervisory role. His objectives revolve around keeping a dialogue going more so than around having an observable and positive effect on classroom practice.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CASES BY PCL AND CL PAIRING

This comparative analysis examines the foregoing case studies according to the conceptual level of the principals (PCL) and the CL pairing in each dyad. The PCL analysis compares and contrasts the similarities and differences that emerged in the content focii and process strategies of high and low CL principals. The CL pairing analysis focusses on the interactive factors at work in each of the supervisory dyads.

High-Low Principal Conceptual Level

The case studies of Brian-Audrey and Bob-Joshua respectively contained a high and a low CL principal. Despite some similarities, the content focii and process strategies were handled differently by the two principals.

Content Focii

The preceding case studies have documented in detail the content focii emphasized by principals Brian and Bob in their respective supervision conferences. This brief review is undertaken solely to provide the basis upon which an analysis of commonalities and differences in focii can be derived. In his first conference, Brian focussed on Audrey's use of instructional time as it related to her day-book planning, her allocation of time to the small reading groups, and the purpose to which she used flashcards to enhance instruction. He also addressed the teacher's stimulus-bounded behaviour when dealing with the small groups and pursued the question of when pupils at that level were introduced to cursive writing. The second conference saw Brian focus again on use of instructional time, particularly as it related to the teacher's use of flashcards, the lesson transitions, and the pacing and sequencing of instruction. In addition, he addressed the teacher's use of unclear terminology. Bob's first conference with Joshua focussed on the cognitive level of the topic, the structure of the library research assignment, the on-task behaviour of pupils in the library, and the extent to which the teacher engaged in cooperative planning with the librarian. His second conference, by contrast, focussed on pupil interjections (with no ostensible link to pupil off-task behaviour), the quantum leap in the teacher's presentation of new concepts and sequencing of instruction, and indicators of pupil learning.

There would appear to be little commonality of content focii between the two principals over both conferences. While Brian was concerned about Audrey's use of instructional time because he saw a connection between the teacher's lack of monitoring and pupil off-task behaviour, Bob seemed to focus on pupil behaviour only in a general sense without connecting it to use of instructional time or other dimensions of the teacher's classroom management. Indeed, most of Bob's concerns could be characterized as principal-specific in that there was a total lack of correspondence between the principal's data and the data collected by the two independent classroom observers. By contrast, Brian was able to develop and sustain a consistent set of content focii in the area of classroom management which was congruent with the data collected by the independent project observers. In other words, Brian tended to be more accurate in his portrayal and interpretation of classroom events than his low conceptual level counterpart. This marked contrast was not as evident in the process strategies that each respective principal used.

Process Strategies

A brief review of Brian's and Bob's process strategies would permit an examination of commonalities and differences in this aspect of their supervisory behaviour. Brian did not engage in scene-setting, rapport-building banter at the outset but began the lesson analysis almost immediately by asking eliciting questions. Initially, he emitted cues about the lesson rather than stating directly

his concerns and proceeded in a soft-spoken, low-key fashion. He seemed to read the conference situation and made conscious decisions to adjust or "flex" accordingly. For example, he sifted through the responses which came from the teacher and carefully chose those concerns he deemed sufficiently consequential and relevant to pursue during the conference. Further, he made a switch in conference strategy towards the end of the first conference from being facilitative of lesson appraisal to stating his concerns directly but tentatively, when the teacher seemed to be unable to pick up appropriately on the cues he had emitted. The entire first conference was marked by Brian's persistent pursuing and returning to his major concern of the teacher's use of instructional time. Brian's second conference was characterized by similar process strategies. He began by eliciting information from the teacher for purposes of lesson appraisal and ascertaining the complexity of the actual teaching situation but quickly resorted to stating his concerns much earlier than in the first conference. Brian's tentative tone of voice and supportive body language accompanied his increasingly directive strategy in a manner which appeared to soften the impact of what he was saying. Moreover, he issued praise and supportive feedback to the teacher on aspects of her teaching in which she had shown a real desire to improve. He also attempted to make connections between and among various aspects of the lesson (e.g., the teacher's disorganized prop distribution and the slow pace of the lesson) which the teacher failed to perceive and grasp. In the final analysis, however, Brian did not force his interpretations upon Audrey because of his undying respect for the professional autonomy of teachers. It is not clear from the two conferences whether Brian conceives of professional autonomy as a teacher's right to individualistic classroom behaviour or as collegial responsibility to maintain and improve competent teaching practices. It would seem from his conference actions that Brian was not clear on this distinction and therefore allowed the notion of professional autonomy to prevent his ensuring that the teacher grasped clearly the general focus and specific details of concerns he felt were consequential to pupil learning in her lessons.

Bob's process strategies in both conferences were characterized by effusive praise for the teacher and his class control. In the first conference he began with an eliciting orientation but could not sustain the focus around concerns he had raised. Consequently, the conference was marked by frequent shifts in focus and a supervisor who was all too quick to express approval of whatever explanation or suggestion the teacher made. Indeed, not only did Bob demonstrate a remarkable inability to withhold supervisory approval, but he also tended to give approval for explanations that were not related to the concern he had intially raised. Being easily and quickly satisfied with the teacher's explanations curtailed Bob's opportunities for probing. Consequently, he also reported working towards raising teacher awareness rather than the fostering of critical examination of teaching behaviour. When he did make a suggestion, e.g., that the teacher and librarian should engage in more cooperative planning, he proceeded to undermine its potency by intimating that it was really up to them to decide whether or not to act on his suggestion. The second conference confirmed that Bob had difficulty in sustaining a focus around an instructional concern and that he was too readily satisfied by the explanations proferred by the teacher. His discussion of the

teacher's classroom management practices suggested that he focussed more on after-the-fact coping behaviours than on before-the-fact preventive strategies. Concomitant with this, Bob appeared to be disinclined to examine the specific details of the lesson and made no attempt to exact a commitment to change instructional practices (in the area of the concerns he raised) on the part of the teacher. He demonstrated that he could pinpoint needy teacher practices, e.g., inappropriate sequencing, but was, at the same time, unable to sustain a critical examination thereof nor make the link between such teacher practices and pupil off-task behaviour.

There would appear to be some commonalities in the process strategies employed by these two principals. Both principals made use of facilitating processes and evidenced considerable respect for the autonomy of the classroom teacher. Despite these similarities, the process strategies used by Brian differed in important ways from those used by Bob. Whereas both principals used supportive feedback and an eliciting orientation, Brian was not content with merely raising teacher awareness. He modified his eliciting orientation to give corrective feedback when he deemed it necessary in order to foster a critical appraisal of the lesson. By contrast, Bob appeared unable or unwilling to do this. At no time in the conference discussion did he succeed in sustaining a focus because of his tendency to give rapid approval to the teacher's tangential explanations. Thus, relative to Brian's strategic use of praise and supportive feedback, Bob's approval-giving behaviour seemed only effusive and ultimately dysfunctional.

Principal-Teacher Conceptual Level Pairing

The preceding analysis has shown some of the different outcomes found to be associated with the principal conceptual level variable. This next section analyses the two case studies for the interactive factors at work in each of the supervisory dyads.

High PCL-Low TCL Dyad: Brian-Audrey

Although previous research (Thies-Sprinthall, 1980; Grimmett, 1984) and the qualitative analysis by PCL would suggest that Brian could function as a more effective supervisor than a low CL principal, his pairing with Audrey, a low CL teacher, indicated that success does not automatically associate with high CL principals. While Brian used an eliciting orientation to raise relevant concerns about Audrey's teaching and attributed responsibility for classroom events to her as teacher, she nevertheless was able to frustrate his attempts to examine closely her management deficiencies as they related to use of instructional time, planning, and monitoring. While Brian developed linkages between and among use of instructional

time, teacher monitoring, and lesson pacing and provided the teacher with some constructive suggestions, Audrey nevertheless succeeded in denying her responsibility as classroom instructional leader and in refusing to accept the reality of Brian's observations and concerns. As a consequence, she picked up on two less consequential suggestions which are relatively easy to implement and which do not affect the essence of her classroom management practices. Although Brian modelled some of the eliciting process strategies taught to the experimental group and although the quantitative analysis found limited positive changes in the teacher's classroom management practices, the qualitative analysis raises questions about the efficacy of such a supervision pairing. For example, are the eliciting process strategies more effective when used with a high CL teacher? Should a principal adopt a more directive approach with a low CL teacher like Audrey? Would a more effective pairing be constituted between a moderate CL principal and a low CL teacher? The findings of this present study do not permit an answer to these intriguing questions.

Low PCL-Low TCL Dyad: Bob-Joshua

Previous research (Thies-Sprinthall, 1980; Grimmett, 1984), developmental theorists (Glickman, 1985), and the preceding analysis by PCL and TCL would all suggest that the Bob-Joshua supervision dyad is not likely to result in positive changes in the teacher's classroom management practices. A close examination of the interactive dynamic in this pairing confirms that this is indeed the case. When Bob raised a concern, Joshua deflected the focus by interrupting or going off on a tangent. Bob, in turn, tolerated this tangential discussion, proving to be unwilling or unable to challenge the teacher or to return to the original point of concern. Indeed, the principal completed the confoundment initiated by the teacher by praising Joshua for his off-task remarks. This state of affairs occurred even when Bob initiated discussion in the form of an eliciting question. Frequently, Joshua failed to understand the intent of the question. The study's data do not permit an assessment of whether the teacher did this wittingly or unwittingly. What can be established, however, is that Joshua did not seek clarification of the question but began talking about something which he wished to address and which appeared to be only marginally relevant to the question posed. Bob once again demonstrated his amazing tolerance for and, indeed, approval of such unfocussed rambling on the teacher's part. What we have in this case is a principal attempting not to be directive yet failing in his eliciting strategy because of his inability or unwillingness to hold onto and retrieve his initial point, to withhold supervisory approval and probe the teacher's explanations according to how they relate to the original point of concern. At the same time, the teacher seems to be intent on confounding the issues raised for discussion in order to avoid a close examination of his teaching behaviour. Such avoidance tendencies on the part of the teacher and the rapid formulation of judgment (in the form of approval) on the part of the principal are typical of low CL practitioners. This raises the question of what can be done with such a dyad to ensure some semblance of a positive impact on the teacher's classroom practices? Raising the conceptual level

is one possibility but Thies-Sprinthall's (1984) study found that the conceptual level of practitioners appeared to be highly resistant to developmental change. Because the Bob-Joshua dyad was in the control group which received no treatment at all, it is not possible to say whether "a common language strategy", a staff development initiative with the teacher deliberating with other teachers around relevant knowledge of specific instructional practices, or the principal being trained in conferencing skills and relevant classroom management content, would have made a difference to the outcome. Since the majority of practitioners fall into the low conceptual level (Bernier, 1976; Oja, 1977; Silver, 1975), however, this dyad might be representative of the "private, cold war" that Blumberg (1980) suggests characterizes most supervisory interventions. If that is the case, it raises a fundamental question about supervision: to what extent does instructional supervision contribute to positive teacher development and an improvement in classroom teaching practices in cases in which the conceptual level of both participants is low? If further research confirms that other cases produce similar outcomes to those found in the Bob-Joshua dyad, then it would prompt a serious examination of why instructional supervision is practised at all in dyads in which the CL pairing is low PCL-low TCL.

CONCLUSIONS

Previous research (Thies-Sprinthall, 1980; Grimmett, 1984; Glickman, 1985) would suggest that a comparison of the conferencing strategies used respectively by a high and low CL principal, each working with a low CL teacher, would demonstrate the educational benefits to be obtained in the supervisory dyad containing a high CL principal. The preceding case studies show that, while the obverse of that premise may be true (i.e., educational benefits are less likely to be obtained in dyads containing low CL principals), such a state of affairs associating effectiveness in instructional supervision with high CL principals does not automatically hold. It would appear that certain context- and situation-specific variables interact with a principal's conceptual level to enhance or inhibit development and positive changes in the teacher's classroom management practices. These would include the teacher's conceptual level and the role that the teacher's responses play in the dynamic of conference interaction, the principal's knowledge of pertinent content (in the case of this study, classroom management), the principal's ability (or lack thereof) to observe classroom events accurately, the principal's ability to transform a facilitating approach into an enabling one, and certain aspects of organizational life which act as constraints on both principal and teacher. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

The Teacher's Conceptual Level (TCL) and the CL Pairing

The foregoing case studies have demonstrated that both high and low CL principals acting as instructional supervisors are constrained by the responses their respective low CL teachers give to their initiating comments or questions. Both Audrey and Joshua tended to deflect the discussion focus, deny responsibility and reality, refuse to accept the validity of the principal's observations, and ultimately made themselves impervious to those sources of information most likely to challenge and expand their teaching repertoire. For them, supervision appeared to be interpreted as evaluation and therefore constituted an unfortunate but necessary evil they had to tolerate but in no sense indulge.[10] These case studies would suggest that knowledge about instructional supervision is more likely to be advanced when understandings about the nature of the dynamic principal-teacher conceptual level pairing are increased.

The Principal's Knowledge of Pertinent Content

It is clear from the case studies that the high CL principal had a greater command of knowledge about classroom management than his low CL counterpart. However, the high CL principal (Brian) had been exposed to research-verified knowledge about classroom management as part of the treatment in the experimental group whereas the low CL principal (Bob), as a member of the control group, had not. One can only speculate about whether the differences that emerged between the two principals' respective knowledge were the result of the study's treatment or the concomitant outcomes of a divergence in conceptual level. What is clear as a result of the study is that principal knowledge of pertinent content about instructional practices does make a difference to the nature of the conference interaction and, to a lesser degree, to the teacher's classroom teaching practices.

The Ability to Observe Classroom Events Accurately

As with the previous point, the two case studies demonstrate considerable difference between the respective abilities of high and low CL principals to observe classroom events accurately. Because no treatment was given to either principal in classroom observation, one could assume that this set of skills varies according to a person's conceptual level. But such an assumption essentially overlooks the role which practice in classroom observation plays. A high CL principal may be able to acquire observational skills at a faster rate than a low CL principal, but the essential point is that the ability to observe classroom events accurately is the outcome of hours of rigorous practice. It would seem to be incontrovertible that a principal, who is unable to capture the essence of a lesson through accurate

---

[10] A detailed explication of teachers' responses to principals' questions and comments is contained in Crehan & Grimmett, 1989.

classroom observation, is unlikely to engage a teacher in the kind of conference dialogue that leads to improvement in classroom practice.

The Ability to Transform Facilitating Behaviours into Enabling Ones

Both principals in the two case studies adopted a facilitating, information-eliciting orientation. The low CL principal's orientation demonstrated a relentless consistency even when situations arose in the conference dialogue calling for some flexibility and forthrightness on his part. By contrast, the high CL principal did show evidence of "flex" when he changed to stating his concerns definitely but tentatively. Whether this change of approach truly *enabled* the teacher to grasp the reality of her classroom management deficiencies in a manner wherein she felt motivated to do something about them, however, is a moot point. That the high CL principal was taught certain facilitating process skills in the experimental group and the low CL principal had a background in counselling provides a possible explanation for the presence of a form of facilitating behaviours. However, evidence of either principal enacting the spirit of such processes, wherein they used facilitating strategies to enable the teachers to address the points of concern from their perspective and meaning, was scant. Only the high CL principal effected any modification in approach and he recognized later in the recall interview that the adaptation was insufficient for the purpose of empowering the teacher to re-frame her classroom experience in ways which would ultimately benefit pupil learning. Transforming facilitating strategies into enabling behaviours would seem to require principals not to follow slavishly the form of facilitating strategies but to know when it is appropriate to change their behaviour in order to foster an internal locus of control within the teachers they supervise. Clearly, high CL principals appear to have a greater propensity towards such a subtle transformation than low CL principals; in the main, however, these two cases demonstrate that high and low CL principals can practice facilitation without necessarily enabling or empowering teachers to address observed lacunae in their classroom practice.

Historical and Organizational Constraints

The daily rhythm of school life would seem to contain factors which act as constraints to instructional supervision. The routine of principal Brian was such that he had difficulty finding time for classroom observation and conferencing. This lack of time bemused Brian and his lack of availability to teachers was a source of frustration for Audrey. Bob also commented on the difficulty of mediating all the demands on his time which came from central office, the community and parents, and from teachers and pupils. Time found and set aside for instructional supervision was indeed a precious resource; so precious in fact that, like gold, there was not much of it at the disposal of these two principals.

One would expect organizational constraints like time to daunt teachers as well. In the main, however, the constraints which seriously impinged on their ability to enter into the process of instructional supervision were historical as well as organizational.

Both Audrey and Joshua had had prior experiences with principals which had left them negatively predisposed towards instructional supervision. Audrey had received two less than satisfactory evaluation reports and had at one point in time been placed on extended medical leave. Although these events had occurred more than five years previously in a different school with a different principal, they nevertheless had scarred her sense of professional confidence and self-efficacy, with the result that she had a tendency to rationalize or evade some of the concerns that Brian was attempting tentatively to raise. Joshua had a similar "hang-up" about evaluation. He reported being tired of the constant evaluations which, until this intervention with Bob, had been carried out without any sharing of data and principal-teacher conferencing. The fact that Joshua interpreted instructional supervision as a form of interpersonal and professional threat serving the principal's bureaucratic purposes probably provides a plausible explanation for his defensive and evasive behaviour.

It is ironic that these two low CL teachers, who both had unfortunate histories and consequently failed to perceive the developmental and professionally energizing side of instructional intervention, were subject to a higher than usual amount of supervision. It would seem that the preconceptions formed by teachers on the basis of prior socialization become exceedingly powerful constraints impacting the nature and dynamic of an intense supervision experience. Unless instructional supervisors can find the time to dialogue initially about teachers' personal biographies and professional histories before even attempting a classroom observation, the time, resources, energy, and mental effort expended in supervisory intervention may be working towards all kinds of different organizational purposes, save the all-important one of classroom improvement.

REFERENCES

Acheson, K.A., & Gall, M.D. (1987). *Techniques in the clinical supervision of teachers: Preservice and inservice applications* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

Alfonso, R.J., Firth, G.R., and Neville, R.F. (1975). *Instructional supervision: A behavior system.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Austin, G. (1979). Exemplary schools and the search for effectiveness. *Educational Leadership, 37*(1), 10-14.

Bellon, J., Eaker, R.E., Huffman, J.O., and Jones, R.V. (1976). *Classroom supervision and instructional improvement: A synergetic process.* Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.

Bents, R.H. (1978). A study of the effects of environmental structure on students of differing conceptual levels. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota. *Dissertation Abstracts International* ED780286.

Bernier, J. (1976). A psychological education intervention for teacher development. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota. *Dissertation Abstracts International* ED776932.

Blumberg, A. (1980). *Supervisors and teachers: A private cold war* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Boulet, F.X. (1981). *Clinical supervision: Alternative for principals.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Bussis, A., Chittenden, E., and Amarel, M. (1976). *Beyond surface curriculum.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Cawelti, G. and Reavis, C. (1980). How well are we providing instructional improvement service? *Educational Leadership, 38*(4).

Clark, D.L., Lotto, L.S., and Astuto, T.A. (1984). Effective schools and school improvement: A comparative analysis of two lines of inquiry. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 20*(3), 41-68.

Coffey, W.C. (1967). Change in teachers' verbal classroom behavior resulting from an in-service program in science education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California at Berkeley. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 1968, *28*, 4506-A.

Cogan, M.L. (1973). *Clinical supervision.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Crawford, J., Gage, N.L., Corno, L., Stayrook, N., Mitman, A., Schunk, D., Stallings, J., Baskin, E., Harvey, P., Austin, D., Cronin, D., and Newman, R. (1978). *An experiment on teacher effectiveness and parent-assisted instruction in third grade.* Stanford, CA: Center for Educational Research.

Crehan, E.P., and Grimmett, P.P. (1989). *Teachers' perspectives on dyadic supervisory interaction* Paper accepted for presentation at the annual meeting of the AERA, San Francisco, CA.

DeBevoise, W. (1984). Synthesis of research on the principal as instructional leader. *Educational Leadership, 41*(5), 19-21. H

Dwyer, D.C. (1984). The search for instructional leadership: Routines and subtleties in the principal's role. *Educational Leadership, 41*(5), 32-38.

Evertson, C., Emmer, E., Sanford, J., and Clements, B. (1982). *Improving classroom management: An experiment in elementary classrooms.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of AERA, New York.

Garman, N.B. (1971). A study of clinical supervision as a resource of college teachers of English. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 32*, 6835A.

Gersten, R., Carnine, D., and Green, S. (1982). The principal as instructional leader: A second look. *Educational Leadership, 39*(1), 47-50.

Glickman, C.D. (1985). *Supervision of instruction: A developmental approach.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Goldhammer, R., Anderson, R.H., and Krajewski, R.J. (1980). *Clinical supervision: Special methods for the supervision of teachers* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Good, T.L., & Brophy, J.E. (1984). *Looking in classrooms.* (3rd ed.). New York: Harper and Row.

Good, T.L. and Grouws, D. (1979). The Missouri mathematics effectiveness project: An experimental study in fourth-grade classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 71*, 355-362.

Grimmett, P.P. (1984). The supervision conference: An investigation of supervisory effectiveness through analysis of participants' conceptual functioning. In P.P. Grimmett (Ed.), *Research in teacher education: Current problems and future projects in Canada.* Vancouver: CSTE/CSCI, pp. 131-166.

Grimmett, P.P. & Crehan, E.P. (1987). *A study of the effects of supervisors' intervention on teacher classroom management performance.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education, Hamilton, Ontario.

Hall, G., Rutherford, W.L., Hord, S.M., and Huling, L.L. (1984). Effects of three principal styles on school improvement. *Educational Leadership, 41*(5), 22-31.

Harris, B.M. (1985). *Supervisory behavior in education* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Holly, F. (1982). Teachers' views on inservice training. *Phi Delta Kappan*, February, 417-418.

Hunter, M. (1984). Knowing, teaching, supervising. In P.L. Hosford (Ed.), *Using what we know about teaching.* Alexandria: Va.: ASCD, pp. 169-203.

Kerr, B.J. (1976). An investigation of the process of using feedback data within the clinical supervision cycle to facilitate teachers' individualization of instruction. Unpublished doctoral disertation, University of Pittsburgh. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 37*, 1374A.

Krajewski, R.J. (1976). Clinical supervision: To facilitate teacher self-improvement. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 9*(2), 58-66.

Leithwood, K.A. and Montgomery, D.J. (1982). The role of the elementary school principal in program improvement. *Review of Educational Research, 52*(3), 309-339.

Leithwood, K.A. and Montgomery, D.J. (1986). *Improving principal effectiveness: The principal profile.* Toronto: OISE Press.

Leslie, J.B. (1982). Training teachers to be professional development leaders. *Journal of Staff Development, 3*(2), 66-79.

Levine, D.U., Levine, R.F., and Eubanks, E.E. (1984). Characteristics of effective inner-city intermediate schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 65*(10).

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1979). The social realities of teaching. In A. Lieberman and L. Miller (Eds.), *Staff development* (pp. 54-68). New York: Teachers College Press.

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1981). Synthesis of research on improving schools. *Educational Leadership, 38*(7), 583-586.

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1984). *Teachers, their world and their work: Implications for school improvement.* Alexandria, Va.: ASCD.

Little, J. (1982). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. *American Educational Research Journal, 19*(3), 325-340.

Lovell, J.T. and Wiles, K. (1983). *Supervision for better schools* (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Lucio, W.H. and McNeil, J.D. (1979). *Supervision in thought and action* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

McGee, J.C. and Eaker, R. (1977). Clinical supervision and teacher anxiety: A collegial approach to the problem. *Contemporary Education, 49*, 24-28.

Mosher, R.L. and Purpel, D. (1972). *Supervision: The reluctant profession.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Nemser, S.F. (1973). Learning to teach. In L. Shulman and G. Sykes (Eds.), *Handbook of teaching and policy* (pp. 150-170). New York: Longman.

Oja, S.N. (1978). A cognitive-structural approach to adult ego, moral, and conceptual development through in-service teachers education. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 39*, 5356A.

Pierce, L.R. (1975). Supervisors' managerial talent and their verbal behavior with teachers during the supervisory conference in clinical supervision: An exploratory analysis. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 36*, 6410A.

Purkey, S.C. and Smith, M.S. (1983). Effective schools: A review. *Elementary School Journal, 83*(4), 427-452.

Reavis, C. (1977). A test of the clinical supervision model. *Journal of Educational research, 70*, 311-315.

Reavis, C. (1978). *Teacher improvement through clinical supervision.* Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa.

Schiff, S. (1982). Training teachers to be staff developers. *Journal of Staff Development, 3*(2), 80-89.

Schroder, H.M., Driver, M.J., & Streufert, S. (1967). *Human information processing: Individuals and groups functioning in complex social situations.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, Inc.

Sergiovanni, T.J. and Starratt, R.J. (1983). *Supervision: Human perspectives* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Silber, P. (1975). Principals' conceptual ability in relation to situation and behavior. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 11* (3), 49-66.

Showers, B. (1983). *Transfer of training.* Paper presented at the annual AERA meeting, Montreal.

Skrak, N.D. (1973). The application of immediate secondary reinforcement to classroom teaching observations in clinical supervision. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 34*, 1140A.

Snyder, K.J. (1983). Instructional leadership for productive schools. *Educational Leadership, 40*(5), 32-37.

Sparks, G.M. (1983). *Inservice education: Training activities, teacher attitude, and behavior change.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University.

Squires, D., Huitt, W., and Segars, J. (1981). Improving classrooms and schools: What's important. *Educational Leadership, 39*(3), 174-179.

Sweeney, J. (1982). Research synthesis on effective school leadership. *Educational Leadership, 39*(5), 346-352.

Thies-Sprinthall, L. (1980). Supervision: An educative or mis-educative process? *Journal of Teacher Education, 21*(4), 17-20.

Withall, J. and Wood, F.H. (1979). Taking the threat out of classroom observation and feedback. *Journal of Teacher Education, 20*(1), 55-58.

Zonca, P.H. (1972). A case study exploring the effects on an intern teacher of the condition of openness in a clinical supervisory relationship. Unpublished dostoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 33*, 658A.

Zumwalt, K.K. (1986). *Improving teaching.* Alexandria, Va.: ASCD.